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ABSTRACT

The following were examined: (1) the Department of Transportation's (DOT) efforts to evaluate the Job Access and Reverse Commute (Job Access) program; (2) transportation and related services provided by Job Access; (3) whether the program fosters collaboration between grantees and others in the design, financing, and delivery of those services; and (4) whether Job Access services would be financially sustainable after the end of Job Access funding. Job Access has met its goal of encouraging collaboration among transportation, human services, and other community-based agencies in Job Access design, implementation, and financing. But most of the program's services are not financially sustainable. For instance, only 12 percent of Job Access grantees said they would continue services after program funding ends, while 41 percent said they would terminate or decrease services severely, and 47 percent were undecided. DOT has not evaluated the program and has not reported to Congress as required. (Appendices include: objectives, scope and methodology of study; services of selected job access grantees; and the survey instrument. Seventeen tables are included.) (AJ)

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United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to Congressional Committees

ED 473 312

December 2002

WELFARE REFORM

Job Access Program Improves Local Service Coordination, but Evaluation Should Be Completed

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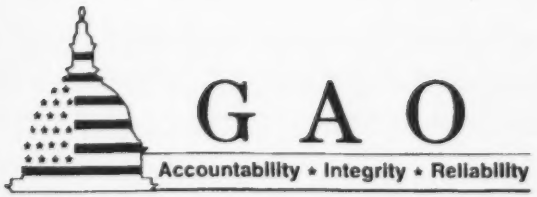

GAO-03-204

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December 2002

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-03-204, a report to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

WELFARE REFORM

Job Access Program Improves Local Service Coordination, but Evaluation Should Be Completed

Why GAO Did This Study

Pursuant to Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), GAO periodically reports on the implementation of the Job Access and Reverse Commute (Job Access) program. The program is designed to assist low-income people in accessing employment opportunities. This report examines the Department of Transportation's (DOT) efforts to evaluate the program and report the results to the Congress. GAO also examined (1) transportation and related services provided by the program; (2) whether the program fosters collaboration between Job Access grantees and others in the design, financing, and delivery of those services; and (3) whether Job Access services would be financially sustainable after the end of Job Access funding.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOT:

- Report to the Congress on the results of the Job Access program, as required by law.
- Base the report on data that fully measures the effectiveness of the Job Access program, including financial sustainability of Job Access projects.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-204.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Katherine Siggerud at (202) 512-2834 or siggerudk@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Since 1999, DOT has awarded over $355 million for 352 Job Access grants in 42 states to help low-income people get to job opportunities and job support services, such as training and child care. Job Access grantees used various approaches to provide transportation for this purpose, such as expanding existing bus service, adding new areas to be served by an existing fixed transit route, or enhancing the frequency of the service.

Approach to Transportation Services by Job Access Grantees

Transportation approach	Percentage of grantees
Fixed bus route extension (frequency or location) established	51
New bus service initiated	43
Demand-responsive service established*	19
Connection to existing service established	14

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because some grantees provided multiple services.

*Demand-responsive service takes riders at times they request to places that are not on a fixed route.

Source: GAO analysis of 1999 grantees' services.

The program has met its goal of encouraging collaboration among transportation, human service, and other community-based agencies in Job Access service design, implementation, and financing. However, most of the program's services are not financially sustainable. For example, 12 percent of Job Access grantees indicated that they could continue their services after the end of program funding, while 41 percent reported they would likely terminate or decrease services, and 47 percent were uncertain about their ability to continue those services.

DOT has not evaluated the Job Access program or reported to the Congress, as TEA-21 requires. The department therefore is missing an opportunity to provide timely information to the Congress that could assist it in deciding whether to reauthorize the program in 2003. GAO has several concerns about DOT's plans to evaluate the Job Access program. For its evaluation, DOT initially planned to use one performance measure—employment sites served. However, using a methodology that is based on this measure would yield limited information because it only partially addresses the program's goal of providing transportation to low-income people and does not address other program goals and criteria. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program officials informed GAO that they also plan to use other performance measures, but they did not provide sufficient detail for GAO to comment on the quality of their evaluation. Moreover, the final report's date of issuance and its contents are uncertain because the report has yet to be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, and the Office of Management and Budget. DOT officials did not provide GAO with an estimated date for submitting the report to the Congress.

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Abbreviations

AITS	Agriculture Industry Transportation Services
CALTRANS	California Department of Transportation
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
DOT	Department of Transportation
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FWTA	Fort Worth Transportation Authority
FY	fiscal year
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
LIFT	Low-Income Flexible Transportation
MTA	Maryland Transit Administration
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
PATH	Vermont Department of Prevention Assistance, Transition, and Health Access
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program
TARC	Transit Authority of River City (Louisville, Kentucky)
TDA	Transportation Development Act (California State)
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WMATA	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

December 6, 2002

The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
Chairman
The Honorable Phil Gramm
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Banking, Housing,
and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Don Young
Chairman
The Honorable James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
House of Representatives

The government's national welfare reform effort seeks to transition welfare recipients from welfare to work. One important factor in welfare recipients' finding and keeping work is their access to adequate transportation. In 1998, the Congress found that while three-fourths of welfare recipients lived in central cities or rural areas, two-thirds of new jobs were located in the suburbs. Public transportation facilities, such as buses or subways, often offer limited or no access to many of the places where jobs are located. As a result, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) authorized up to $750 million for fiscal years 1999 through 2003 for the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Job Access and Reverse Commute (Job Access) Program. The program attempts to fill gaps in transportation services that constitute barriers to low-income people[1] accessing job opportunities. The program provides grants to transit agencies, local human service agencies, and others. DOT's two major goals for the program are to (1) provide transportation and related services to urban, suburban, and rural areas to assist low-income individuals, including welfare recipients, with access to employment and related services, such as child care and training, and (2) increase collaboration

[1]The Job Access program serves "low-income" people, who are defined as having family income at or below 150 percent of the official poverty line as defined in 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). People who are low income and are eligible to use the Job Access Program include welfare recipients who qualify for assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program as well as beneficiaries of other federal assistance programs.

among such parties as transportation providers, human service agencies, employers, and others in planning, funding, and delivering those services. Since TEA-21 expires at the end of fiscal year 2003, the Congress will soon be making decisions regarding the possible reauthorization of the Job Access Program.

TEA-21 requires that we report on the implementation of the Job Access Program. To date, we have issued six reports on the Program from May 1998 through December 2001, and we also testified on the Program in April 2002 before the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. (See app. I for a summary of the results of our previous reports on the Program.)

As agreed with your offices, this report

- examines the status of DOT's efforts to evaluate the Job Access Program and report to the Congress and

- discusses our findings about the Job Access Program's efforts to (1) provide transportation and related services to allow low-income people to reach employment and related opportunities; (2) increase collaboration in the design, financing, and delivery of the services of Job Access projects; and (3) foster the financial sustainability of the services delivered by Job Access projects after program funding terminates.

To meet these objectives, we examined Program documentation at DOT, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Labor (Labor); interviewed officials of these agencies; conducted a mail survey of all 173 fiscal year 1999 and fiscal year 2000 Job Access grantees with projects that were still operating at the time we did our study,[2] achieving a response rate of about 88 percent (or 152 grantees); and interviewed nine experts in welfare reform and/or transportation. We selected these experts on the basis of our review of transit and welfare reform literature and referrals from HHS, Labor, DOT, and national associations, such as the Community Transportation Association of

[2]In 2000, we surveyed organizations responsible for implementing 194 projects selected for award in 1999; the numbers of projects and grantees have changed since then because some projects were dropped, some grantees withdrew from the program, and other grants were consolidated.

America (CTAA).[3] We also visited and documented activities at 14 locations where Job Access projects were being implemented. We judgmentally selected these locations to obtain a nationwide geographic dispersion of existing projects; different sizes (large urban, medium-size urban, and small cities/rural areas) of the areas served by Job Access projects; and various types of services funded by Job Access grants. Moreover, to address the first objective of our study, we monitored DOT's efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and report to the Congress by June 2000, as required by TEA-21. Our work was performed from January 2002 through October 2002 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. For more detailed information about our scope and methodology, see appendix II.

Results in Brief

DOT has not reported to the Congress on the results of an evaluation of the Program, as TEA-21 required; therefore, DOT is missing an opportunity to provide timely information that could be useful as the Congress considers whether to reauthorize the program in 2003. Though required to submit the report by June 2000, DOT neither submitted the report nor established a date for doing so. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Program officials are uncertain of when the report would be submitted to the Congress because the report must undergo a review and approval process by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, we have serious concerns about FTA's proposal for the evaluation because, as we testified in April 2002,[4] the agency's plan to focus its evaluation on the number of employment sites[5] served by each Job Access project does not fully address key aspects of the program. For example, the employment sites measure addresses only the program goal of providing transportation-related services and does not address the other goal of encouraging collaboration in the design, financing, and service delivery of Job Access projects. According to DOT officials, their report to

[3]The Community Transportation Association of America is an association with a stated goal of improving the mobility of low-income and other disadvantaged people. The association conducts research, provides technical assistance, offers educational programs, and serves as an advocate for coordinated community transportation.

[4]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: DOT Has Made Progress in Implementing the Job Access Program but Has Not Evaluated the Impact*, GAO-02-640T (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 17, 2002).

[5]An employment site, where employers are located, is considered accessible if it is located within one-quarter mile of Job Access transportation services provided by the grantee.

the Congress will include additional data that they believe would address both of the program's objectives but not the selection criterion that the services funded by Job Access projects continue after the termination of program funding. However, we are unable to comment on the evaluation, because agency officials did not provide us with a draft of the report.

Our analysis shows that, through its grants, the Job Access Program funds a variety of transportation-related services that are intended to assist low-income people in traveling to the workplace and associated support services, such as child care or job training. In awarding over $355 million in grants in 42 states through fiscal year 2002, the program funded such services as extending existing bus routes to serve low-income populations and informing clients about available transportation service and their use. In addition, according to grantees and experts we contacted, the program has increased planning, financial, and service delivery collaboration among local transportation providers, human service agencies, employers, and others. For example, over three-quarters of our survey's respondents[6] stated that the program increased collaboration with other transit and human service agencies. Such collaboration allows transit agencies to design and provide transportation service that is based on information from other agencies about where low-income people live and where jobs and support services are located. However, more collaboration at the federal level is needed between Labor and DOT to enable grantees to obtain additional federal funding for Job Access projects. Specifically, some grantees have not used funds from Labor's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs[7] as a match for Job Access grants because Labor and DOT officials have not yet clarified the eligibility of WIA funds for this purpose. According to the Job Access Program coordinator, federal matching funds, such as those from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and the WIA programs, have an advantage over nonfederal matching funds because these are formula programs that have a predictable funding stream to the states and localities so that funding can be maintained without disruption. However, the ability of many grantees to financially sustain their Job Access services after the end of program assistance (a criterion for FTA to consider in the selection of Job Access projects) is uncertain. Only 12 percent of our survey's respondents said

[6]For our study, we surveyed all of the 173 grantees that FTA selected for grants during fiscal years 1999 and 2000; 152 responded, for a response rate of 88 percent.

[7]WIA programs provide individuals with job training and placement services and transportation to those services.

they would maintain or expand the level of Job Access services after the end of Job Access funding; 41 percent said they would decrease or discontinue services; and 47 percent were uncertain about continuing services. According to one expert we contacted, because many Job Access services are more costly than the services for the general transit clientele, grantees would likely continue operating the Job Access services only as long as federal funding covered the associated costs. According to FTA program officials, FTA has recently taken new steps to coordinate with Labor by forwarding questions to Labor requesting clarification on the use of WIA funds as Job Access matching funds. FTA program officials said that Labor's responses might be published on a government Web site, thereby informing grantees and other stakeholders of the availability of WIA funds for Job Access purposes.

We are making a recommendation to the Secretary of Transportation that DOT report to the Congress on the results of its evaluation of the Job Access Program, as required by law. Another recommendation is intended to help ensure that in reporting to the Congress, DOT evaluates the program against both program goals as well as against the selection criterion that Job Access projects be financially sustainable after the end of program funding. A third recommendation addresses barriers to the use of WIA funds as matching funds for Job Access grants.

We submitted a draft of this report to DOT, including FTA, for review and comment.

Background

The enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 dramatically altered the nati'on's system to provide assistance to the poor. The 1996 act replaced the existing entitlement program for poor families with block grants to the states to provide temporary assistance for needy families under the TANF Program. Also, under the TANF Program, states provide cash assistance to needy families with children and provide parents with job preparation; work; and support services, including transportation benefits. The 1996 act gave states flexibility in designing their programs to best provide those benefits and services. HHS's Administration for Children and Families manages the TANF Program and has provided about $16.5 billion annually for states to use to assist needy families to become self-sufficient, including about $800 million annually for transportation benefits. In addition, Labor's Employment and Training Administration administers programs authorized under WIA, with about $4 billion in fiscal year 2002 appropriations to

provide individuals with job training and placement services. The WIA-sponsored programs also provide transportation services to take their clients to program-supported services, such as job training and placement.[8] The TANF- and WIA-sponsored transportation efforts focus on their program clients, while the Job Access Program attempts to improve transportation for low-income people in general.

With the enactment of TEA-21, DOT became a sponsor of welfare-to-work initiatives. The Job Access Program is focused on assisting address the transportation aspect of welfare reform by assisting low-income people travel to work and/or employment-related activities. Many low-income people and welfare recipients do not have access to cars and existing public transportation systems cannot always bridge the gap between where low-income people live and where jobs are located. In addition, many entry-level jobs require shift work in evenings or on weekends, when public transportation services are either limited or unavailable. When the Job Access Program was established, $750 million was authorized from fiscal years 1999 through 2003 for the Program. Appropriations have totaled $375 million through fiscal year 2002, with $75 million appropriated in each of the fiscal years 1999 and 2000, and $100 million and $125 million appropriated for fiscal years 2001 and 2002, respectively.[9]

The Job Access Program was established to close gaps in transportation services for low-income people in places where and at times when such transportation was not available. The program addressed these gaps by funding, through grants, new transportation and related services and expanding existing services to help low-income people access employment opportunities and related support services. TEA-21 identified a variety of factors for DOT to consider in funding Job Access projects, such as the need for Job Access services as evidenced by the percentage of the population in the area receiving welfare benefits; the demonstrated collaboration between the grantee and other stakeholders, such as other

[8]The expenditures for WIA-funded transportation services have not been estimated or determined.

[9]Some of the Job Access Program funds are "guaranteed," that is, subject to a procedural mechanism designed to ensure that minimum amounts of funding are made available each year. TEA-21 provided guaranteed funding of $50 million for fiscal year 1999, $75 million for fiscal year 2000, $100 million for fiscal year 2001, $125 million for fiscal year 2002, and $150 million for fiscal year 2003. In addition, as of the date of this report, DOT is being funded through a continuing resolution, and the final funding level for the program for fiscal year 2003 has not been decided.

transportation and human service agencies; and the extent to which an applicant identified long-term financing strategies that would support the Job Access services after the end of the grant. Job Access grantees are required to provide at least 50 percent matching funds from other sources, which may include federal sources of funds available for transportation services, such as the TANF or WIA programs.

DOT has consistently used two goals that it synthesized from TEA-21 as the primary criteria for evaluating, selecting, and funding Job Access projects to be funded through program grants. Those goals are that Job Access projects and services funded should

- provide transportation and related services to urban, suburban, and rural areas to assist low-income individuals, including welfare recipients, with access to employment and related services, such as child care and training, and

- increase collaboration among such parties as transportation providers, human service agencies, employers, and others in designing, funding, and delivering those transportation services.

In selecting Job Access projects, DOT also considered the extent to which the projects would be financially sustainable after the end of Job Access Program funding.[10]

DOT's Evaluation Has Been Delayed and May Not Address Significant Aspects of the Job Access Program

DOT has not reported to the Congress on the results of an evaluation of the Job Access Program, as TEA-21 required. DOT therefore is missing an important opportunity to provide information that could be useful as the Congress considers whether to reauthorize the program in 2003. FTA Program officials are not certain about when the report will be submitted to the Congress and have not established a date for doing so.

[10]When selecting projects, DOT also has considered such factors as the geographic dispersion of Job Access projects and the innovative nature of proposed Job Access services.

Evaluation Report Has Been Delayed, and Its Submittal Date Is Uncertain

DOT has delayed completion of its evaluation of the Job Access Program, and the date that it will be submitted to the Congress is uncertain. TEA-21 required that DOT evaluate the Job Access Program and submit a report to the Congress by June 2000. FTA officials stated their intentions to us several times and to the Congress to complete and submit the required evaluation report. DOT's delays in issuing the report have cost it an important opportunity to provide information to the Congress on the effectiveness of the Job Access Program as the Congress begins its debate on the reauthorization of the program. In addition, as shown below, we have repeatedly reported on and emphasized the need for DOT to evaluate the effectiveness of the Job Access Program.

- In May 1998, before the program was enacted into law, we reported that DOT lacked specific information for assessing how a Job Access Program would improve mobility for low-income workers, and we recommended that DOT establish specific objectives.
- In December 1998, we reported that DOT was in the process of establishing an evaluation plan for the program.[11]
- In November 1999, we noted that DOT had not yet completed a plan for evaluating the program, although we had recommended that it do so.[12]
- In December 2000, we reported that the evaluation plan had been completed and that for the purposes of reporting under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, DOT had established a goal of serving 4,050 new employment sites in fiscal year 2000, and 8,050 in fiscal year 2001.[13]
- On April 17, 2002, before the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, we testified that DOT had not yet prepared the required evaluation report and had

[11]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Implementing DOT's Access to Jobs Program*, GAO/RCED-99-36 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 8, 1998).

[12]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Implementing DOT's Access to Jobs Program in Its First Year*, GAO/RCED-00-14 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 26, 1999).

[13]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: DOT Is Making Progress in Implementing the Job Access Program*, GAO-01-133 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 4, 2000).

no definite date for submitting the study.[14] At that hearing, DOT officials stated that the report would be completed and sent to the Congress by June 2002.

Throughout our study, FTA program officials discussed the reasons for the delays in issuing the report to the Congress. FTA program officials explained that to meet the requirement that they submit an evaluative report to the Congress by June 2000, they asked the grantees to submit data regarding the employment sites served by Job Access projects as well as the numbers of employers and entry-level jobs at those sites. They explained that they found that only about two-fifths of the data they obtained from grantees proved to be useful, because the rest of the data were inconsistently or inaccurately reported. By the summer of 2001, DOT officials decided that the data were out-of-date. They decided to wait for new data to be reported to them and to redraft the report to the Congress using the new data.

As of the end of our review, FTA program officials continued to be unsure of the date the evaluative report will be submitted to the Congress. In November 2002, they said that they had completed their draft report and that the draft was being reviewed by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation for approval before the report could be sent to the Office of Management and Budget for its approval. FTA Program officials did not provide us with an estimated date for submitting the draft report to the Office of Management and Budget and the final report to the Congress.

Reporting Only Employment Sites Would Not Comprehensively Evaluate the Program, and Contents of Final Report to the Congress Are Uncertain

When we testified on April 17, 2002, DOT had planned to use only employment sites as a measure of program effectiveness. We testified that this measure presents only a partial picture of program effectiveness in meeting program goals for the following reasons:

- First, employment sites attempt to measure whether the Job Access Program establishes effective transportation services that help low-income people reach jobs—only one of the program goals. However, employment sites do not address the other program goal of whether projects were designed and implemented in a collaborative fashion involving the grantee and stakeholders. In addition, employment sites

[14]GAO-02-640T.

do not address the selection criterion of whether Job Access projects can be financially sustained after the end of program funding.

- Second, the use of employment sites does not fully capture whether the Job Access Program effectively addresses the program goal of providing transportation-related services to low-income people. Employment sites do not capture such information as the number of jobs available at a site or the number of Job Access beneficiaries using a Job Access service over a period of time.

Grantees that responded to our survey reported that they are using additional indicators of and data on the performance of Job Access services. These grantees reported that, for internal reporting purposes, they collect a variety of data that can indicate the effectiveness of Job Access services. These survey results are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Performance Measures Cited by Grantees Responding to Our Survey

Performance measures reported by grantees	Percentage of grantees that cited the performance measure
Number of passengers that use a new or enhanced transportation service	81
Number of trips made by Job Access service	64
Number of employment sites accessed through the Job Access service	60
Number of employers made available to low-income people through a Job Access service	57
Number of jobs served by a Job Access transportation service	53
Number of TANF clients who were able to obtain and keep employment as a result of Job Access service	25

Source: GAO survey of the 173 grantees that were awarded their grants in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 and are still operating their Job Access projects. One-hundred, fifty-two (152) responded to our survey. See also appendix IV of this report.

In addition to the measures listed in the table, experts we contacted suggested that DOT consider such measures as (1) the number of new and expanded transportation services (including data on service frequency, hours, and miles); (2) the level of collaboration achieved; and (3) the beneficiaries' views of the effectiveness of Job Access services. In 1998,

DOT funded a study that also identified many of these same measures for evaluating prospective Job Access projects.

After we discussed with FTA program officials their plans to use only employment sites as performance measures, they stated that they planned to issue an evaluative report to the Congress that would contain information in addition to employment sites. In September 2002, we requested that FTA program officials provide a draft of the report for our review or a description of the evaluative methodology. In response, on October 4, 2002, they provided us with a memorandum that listed the contents of the report they proposed for the evaluative report to the Congress, including a list of the performance measures they proposed to use. According to FTA program officials and this document, the evaluative report would contain the results of a study by the University of Illinois, including surveys of passengers who were riding Job Access vehicles and studies of Job Access grantees. FTA program officials told us that they hoped to profile the services provided by the Job Access Program, including data on the geographic distribution of the services, the types of transportation-related services provided, the costs of the services, and the cost per ride. They also proposed an assessment of the program that would include such indicators as the number of employment sites, the number of jobs, and the job support services made available by Job Access projects. Other proposed measures include Job Access project ridership and user characteristics, such as users' age, income, car ownership, driver's license status, and work history, and information about users' assessments of the importance of the Job Access service. According to the measures that FTA program officials listed, their report might address the second objective of the program by conveying information on Job Access planning partnerships between transportation and human service providers as well as community representatives and employers. The report also might address the financial partnerships established to fund Job Access services, such as the partnerships involving transportation providers, human service providers, and private and not-for-profit organizations.

Notwithstanding the information given to us by FTA program officials about the proposed contents for their report to the Congress, for the following reasons we continue to believe that contents of the final report are uncertain, including whether the report would evaluate the program against both program goals and selection criterion:

- First, FTA's list of the performance indicators that FTA proposed for its report to the Congress did not specify how FTA would collect these

additional performance data—an important consideration given the results of FTA's earlier efforts to collect performance data from the Job Access grantees.

- Second, the document did not contain sufficient information for us to comment on the adequacy of the report that FTA program officials propose to submit to the Congress or the rigor of the proposed evaluative methodology. For example, the document did not specify how the data would be used to address the goals and selection criterion of the Job Access Program.

- Third, as previously stated, FTA program officials must still submit the draft through a review process. The reviewing parties may not approve the contents of the report as proposed by FTA program officials.

Varied Services Delivered and Collaboration Improved, but Projects' Sustainability and Use of Federal Funds Can Be Improved

In awarding over $355 million in grants in 42 states through fiscal year 2002, the Job Access Program funded such services as extending existing bus routes to serve low-income populations and implementing services that provide information to clients about available transportation services and their use. Moreover, the program has increased planning, financial, and service delivery collaboration among local transportation providers, human service and job placement agencies, employers, and others in providing access to employment and employment support services. However, the ability of many Job Access projects to be financially sustainable after the end of program assistance (a criterion FTA considered in the selection of Job Access projects) is uncertain. In addition, some states have not used WIA funds as Job Access matching funds, because specific guidance on the use of WIA funds has not been issued.

The Job Access Program Funded a Variety of Services to Help Low-Income People Travel to Work

Through Job Access grants, the program served a broad range of geographic areas, including large and medium-size cities as well as small towns and rural areas. Most grantees—about two-thirds of them—are traditional transit providers, such as metropolitan transit authorities or bus companies. The remaining grantees, such as local human service agencies, local housing agencies, and faith- and community-based organizations, do not provide transit services as a primary activity.

As shown in table 2, Job Access grantees used a variety of approaches to provide transportation services that assist low-income people to access job

opportunities. Many Job Access projects involved expanding existing transit resources, such as bus routes. On the basis of our analysis of project documentation, about 51 percent of the 181 grantees selected in fiscal year 1999 modified an existing fixed transit route by adding new areas served or by enhancing the frequency of the service, while 43 percent added entirely new bus routes to serve the needs of low-income people.[15] For example, the Santa Rosa, California, transit agency started a new route that provides bus service from a low-income neighborhood to employment locations on the other side of town and training centers en-route. According to transit officials, this service will eventually be incorporated into the existing transit network once their Job Access grant is ended.

Table 2: Approach to Transportation Services by Job Access Grantees

Transportation approach	Percentage of grantees[a]
Fixed bus route extension (frequency or location) established[b]	51
New bus service initiated	43
Demand-responsive service established[c]	19
Connection to existing service established[d]	14

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 because some grantees provided multiple services.

[b]Fixed bus routes are traditional bus routes that operate on predetermined streets and at fixed times.

[c]Demand-responsive service refers to a transit service, often utilizing small buses or vans, that take riders to locations they request at times they request.

[d]Connection to existing service refers to a new transit service that transports riders to preexisting transit routes—for example, bus or van connections to a subway system.

Source: Analysis of project data on all 181 grantees that FTA selected in fiscal year 1999 as presented in report GAO/RCED-00-14. These grantees include over 80 percent of the grantees still participating in the Job Access Program.

According to our analysis, grantees used a variety of transportation modes—in particular, vans, buses, or rail—to provide those transportation services for low-income people. Forty-one percent of the Job Access grantees used vans to serve low-income people. For example, because some low-income people faced problems getting to and from work during late hours, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

[15]The fiscal year 1999 grantees include over 80 percent of the grantees still participating in the Job Access Program. See GAO/RCED-00-14.

began a demand-responsive[16] shuttle van service that operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for those needing transportation during late evening and early morning service hours. In addition, 14 percent of the grantees utilized buses or rail to provide Job Access services, while 9 percent utilized carpools or ridesharing, and 4 percent utilized taxis.

About one-third of the grantees provided information to assist low-income people to better utilize existing transportation resources to get to employment and related support services. Specifically, 31 percent of the grantees employed an information coordinator or information brokerage center to provide information on how to use existing transit facilities and services for travel to work, training, child care, and other support services. For example, since fiscal year 1999, WMATA has received about $3.2 million in Job Access funds and, among other things, created the Washington Regional Call Center that provides a central location where eligible, low-income people can call to get exact trip information. Under this same grant, Montgomery County, Maryland, used Job Access funds to provide transit information by creating a Web page for human service employment centers to use to help their clients find ways to get to work. In another example, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet received a $2.5 million grant in fiscal year 2000 and established a centralized brokerage system to help low-income people utilize demand-responsive service in rural areas.

Some grantees have provided innovative services for the specialized needs of low-income people or to serve special populations, as the following examples demonstrate:

- The Good News Garage—a community-based, nonprofit association, which is based in Burlington, Vermont—used $277,935 in Job Access funding in 2000 for a service called CommuteShare. The Good News Garage obtains, repairs, and provides used vehicles to economically disadvantaged people. The CommuteShare Program made some repaired vehicles available for carpools and demand-responsive transportation to take low-income people to and from work. According to Good News Garage officials, about 75 percent of the TANF recipients who receive cars provided by the project eventually leave TANF and

[16]Demand-responsive service refers to a transit service scheduled in advance, often utilizing small buses or vans, that take riders to locations they request at times they request.

become economically self-sufficient. About 190 people have participated in the project, with about 25 participating at one time.

- Project Renewal, a rehabilitation center for homeless men and women located in New York City, used Job Access funding of $799,337 to implement its Suburban Jobs project.[17] Project Renewal identifies and secures job opportunities in suburban areas around New York City and places formerly homeless New Yorkers in unsubsidized employment. According to the project's administrator, Suburban Jobs directs vans daily to five worksites, where employers offer at least $6.50 per hour to each participant. Project Renewal's housing facilities as well as other nonprofit employment programs refer qualified candidates for Suburban Jobs. Project Renewal identifies appropriate employment opportunities, prepares clients for interviews, supplements public transportation through its own van service to the suburban jobsites, and provides counseling to project beneficiaries on their way to and from work. (See app. III for more information about the projects we visited.)

Job Access Program Has Met Its Goal of Improving Collaboration between Grantees and Stakeholders

The Job Access Program has met its goal of increasing planning, financial, and service delivery collaboration among local transportation providers, human service and job placement agencies, employers, and others in providing access to employment and employment support services. Individual Job Access grantees and welfare reform and transportation experts we contacted stated that the Job Access Program brought together transit and human service agencies that have not widely collaborated in the past. According to our survey of grantees selected in fiscal years 1999 and 2000, almost 80 percent of the 152 grantees that responded indicated that the Job Access Program increased cooperation with other transit agencies, and 88 percent indicated that the program increased cooperation with human service agencies. In addition, all but one of the nine transportation and welfare reform experts we contacted stated that this significant increase in collaboration at the grantee level was the most successful result of the Job Access Program. One expert noted that the Job Access requirement for matching funds further encouraged grantees to approach state and local agencies that administer TANF funds to use those funds as part of a project's matching funds. About 58 percent of the grantees that

[17]FTA provided the Job Access grants for Project Renewal for fiscal years 1999 and 2001.

responded to our survey indicated they used TANF funds as part of their required matching funds.

On the basis of our survey and visits to Job Access grantees, coordination between grantees and state and local stakeholders to plan and implement Job Access services occurred in varied forms. In some cases, transit agencies consulted with human service agencies to design new transportation services for low-income people. In other cases, coordination included simple referrals of low-income clients from human service agencies to the Job Access grantee for information about transportation services, such as vanpools, bus routes, and demand-responsive van services. Housing authorities also collaborated with transit agency grantees to transport low-income people from public housing to jobs, training, and/or child care. In addition, transit agency grantees often partnered with local human service agencies and local workforce investment boards by sending representatives to job fairs and one-stop job placement and training facilities to train low-income people to use the transit system to commute to work.

Each of the 14 grantees we visited cited increased cooperation as a program benefit, although they ascribed varying degrees of difficulty in achieving such cooperation. Officials of state transportation and human service agencies we contacted said that applying for the Job Access grant made transit agencies aware of the need to tailor transportation services to low-income persons. Human service agency officials also said their involvement with the Job Access grant increased their awareness of the need to consider low-income persons' transportation needs when implementing human service programs. The Capital District Transit Authority in Albany, New York, credited its Job Access project with encouraging it to develop new working relationships. Transit Authority officials stated that information from those agencies helped it redesign its bus routes to provide service that was more responsive to the needs of low-income people. WMATA officials also credited the Job Access Program with enabling them to take the lead, as the region's largest transit agency, in coordinating the Job Access services with smaller, regional, transit service providers. In Louisville, Kentucky, the Transit Authority of River City coordinated with 43 different private, public, and nonprofit agencies in developing its Job Access project. The Job Access project received its matching funds from the City of Jeffersontown, Kentucky; United Parcel Service; and Kentuckiana Works—the Workforce Investment Board sponsored by Labor. The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department and the University of New Mexico developed several

databases of publicly funded vehicles, TANF households by zip code, and jobsites to help local agencies plan transportation services for low-income people. On the other hand, Ft. Worth Transit Authority officials cited the administrative burden related to obtaining funds from other federal programs as their reason for being reluctant to seek out matching funds from other partners.

Collaboration at the Federal Level Is Needed to Clarify That WIA Funds Can Be Used to Match Job Access Grants

DOT agreed that the use of WIA funds as a match for Job Access grants needs to be clarified, and it plans to continue its efforts to collaborate with Labor to issue new guidance to states. Currently, it is not clear to grantees or to the state agencies that administer Labor programs that WIA funds can be used as matching funds for Job Access grants, in part because Labor, which administers WIA programs, and DOT have not issued written guidance indicating that WIA funds can be used for this purpose. Labor, DOT, and trade association officials we contacted agreed that existing guidelines on the use of WIA funds indicate that those funds can be used for a variety of purposes, but are ambiguous on whether those funds can be used to pay for transportation services. As previously mentioned, applicants for Job Access grants must obtain at least 50 percent matching funds from other sources.[18] Some grantees used WIA funds as Job Access project matching funds, while others did not.

DOT and Labor officials are in the process of trying to issue guidelines about using WIA funds for Job Access purposes. Labor issued an internal E-mail stating that WIA funds could be used as matching funds for Job Access projects; however, Labor did not disseminate this knowledge outside of the department to the state and local agencies that provide the WIA-funded services. FTA program officials told us that they are currently working with Labor to issue clarification about the use of WIA funds and have has sponsored an effort by a CTAA working group for this purpose. FTA officials said that the working group queried Labor's Employment and Training Administration about the use of WIA funds. Once answers are received, they may be published over the Internet on a federal Web site, according to FTA program officials.

According to experts we contacted, as well as CTAA, DOT, and Labor officials, clarification of federal guidelines could help states understand

[18]DOT and HHS have issued joint guidance to the states and grantees that TANF funds could be used to match Job Access grants.

that federal funds, such as WIA funds, can be used as part of the match. According to these officials, some states, such as New York, have interpreted federal guidelines to reach a conclusion that it is not permissible to use WIA funds as Job Access project matching funds. The interpretation has precluded grantees in those states from using WIA funds as a source for obtaining the necessary match for a Job Access grant.

Using federal funds as matching funds—such as WIA and TANF funds—can be advantageous for Job Access grantees because federal funds may be more predictable and stable than nonfederal matching funds. According to the Job Access Program coordinator, federal matching funds, such as TANF and WIA, have an advantage over nonfederal matching funds because these are formula programs that have a predictable funding stream to the states and localities so that funding can be maintained without disruption. Also, more sources of funds available as a match for Job Access grants would provide additional options to grantees and improve their ability to sustain their projects. One of our previous surveys of Job Access grantees indicated that soliciting, finding, and maintaining matching funds was difficult for many grantees. For example, 34 percent of the grantees selected in fiscal year 1999 that responded to our 2000 survey reported that FTA's lengthy grant approval process caused problems with the availability of their project's matching funds, and seven projects were withdrawn (about 4 percent of the Job Access projects) after losing their matching funds.[19]

Financial Sustainability of Many Job Access Projects Is in Doubt

The ability of many Job Access projects to be financially sustainable after the end of Job Access assistance is questionable. DOT selected Job Access projects by considering, among other factors, the ability of projects to achieve financial sustainability after the end of Job Access Program funding. More specifically, in evaluating applications for Job Access projects, FTA program officials assessed the extent to which a prospective grantee identified long-term financing strategies to support the Job Access services after the end of Job Access funding. However, FTA program officials consider financial sustainability to be secondary to other program goals.

[19]GAO-01-133.

The results of our survey of grantees selected in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 indicate that many Job Access projects would probably be discontinued after the end of DOT funding, and many other projects would face uncertain prospects for continuation. Specifically, about 41 percent of the respondents to our survey reported that after the end of Job Access funding, they would have to decrease the scope of services or discontinue services altogether once their Job Access funding ends.[20] Another 47 percent of the grantees responded that they were uncertain about their ability to continue their services. The remaining 12 percent reported that they would continue their projects at the same or expanded levels after the end of their Job Access funding. One expert explained that many Job Access services are more costly than the services for the general transit clientele; grantees would likely continue operating the Job Access services only as long as federal funding covered the associated costs.

Conclusions

Because DOT has not evaluated the Job Access Program and reported the findings to the Congress as required by law, the department is missing an opportunity to provide important information on a timely basis to the Congress on the effectiveness of the program. FTA program officials have not provided us with a specific date for issuing the report because the draft must still be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget before release to the Congress. In addition, the usefulness of the report is also in doubt: If the report contains information only on employment sites, then it would address only the first program goal of providing transportation services to low-income people while ignoring the other goal of promoting collaboration in the design, financing, and delivery of those services and the criterion of ensuring that Job Access projects are financially sustainable after the end of program funding. Finally, while the law and guidelines allow the use of other federal funds to match Job Access grants, neither DOT nor Labor have provided written guidance clarifying the eligibility of funds from Labor's WIA programs for those purposes. As a result, some states will not allow grantees to use WIA funds to match Job Access grants.

[20]Of the 152 grantees that responded to our survey, 142 grantees answered this question.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of Transportation take the following actions:

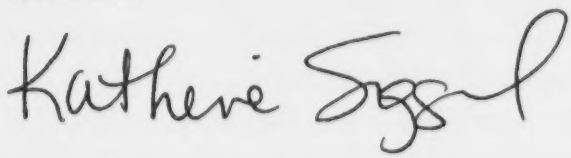
- Report to the Congress, as required by TEA-21, on the results of the evaluation of the Job Access Program.
- Include in the report to the Congress, an evaluative methodology that examines the Job Access Program's effectiveness in meeting its goals of (1) establishing transportation-related services that help low-income individuals, including welfare recipients, reach jobs and employment support services, such as child care and training, and (2) increasing planning, financial, and service delivery collaboration among local transportation providers, human services agencies, and others in providing access to employment and employment support services. The report also should examine the financial sustainability of Job Access projects after the end of Job Access Program funding.
- In conjunction with the Department of Labor, issue guidance to states providing clarification on the use of Workforce Investment Act funds as matching funds for Job Access projects.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided DOT with a draft of this report for review and comment. We met with DOT and FTA program officials who provided us with comments on our draft report. The officials generally agreed with most aspects of our report. They stated that our survey of Job Access grantees provides interesting, unique, and useful data, worthy of greater emphasis in our report. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that it is important to emphasize both our survey and DOT's progress in its evaluation report because DOT risks not having the report available to the Congress in time to assist in making decisions about reauthorizing the program. With regard to our first recommendation, agency officials stated that the Job Access Program evaluation, required by TEA-21, has been drafted and is being processed through the Department; however, the officials were not sure when the report would be issued. With regard to our second recommendation, the officials said that the evaluation report would fulfill the department's statutory requirement and address most of the elements specified in the recommendation. With regard to our third recommendation, the officials indicated that DOT has been working closely with Labor to clarify issues and provide guidance related to using Labor's WIA funds as matching funds for Job Access projects. As appropriate, we

revised our report to, among other things, provide updated information on the status of DOT's evaluative report to the Congress and DOT's efforts to coordinate with the Labor to clarify the use of WIA funds as Job Access matching funds.

We are sending copies of this report to the cognizant congressional committees; the Secretary of Transportation; the Administrator, Federal Transit Administration; the Secretary of Labor; the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and other interested parties. We will make copies available to others on request, and the report will be available on GAO's Web site at www.gao.gov for no charge. If you have any questions about this report, please call me at (202) 512-2834 or e-mail me at siggerudk@gao.gov. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.



Katherine A. Siggerud
Acting Director, Physical
Infrastructure Issues

Summary of Results of Previous GAO Reports

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) requires that we report on the implementation of the Job Access and Reverse Commute (Job Access) Program. To date, we have issued a report on transportation and welfare reform efforts in May 1998, before the program was established,[21] and five other reports on the program: in December 1998, November 1999, December 2000, August 2001, and December 2001.[22]

In May 1998, we reported that the proposed Job Access Program would aid the national welfare reform effort by, among other things, providing additional resources to transport welfare recipients to work. We recommended that the Department of Transportation (DOT) (1) establish specific objectives, performance criteria, and goals for measuring the program's progress; (2) require grantees to coordinate transportation strategies with local job placement and other social service agencies; and (3) work with other federal agencies to coordinate welfare-to-work activities. TEA-21 reflected these recommendations and required appropriate action by DOT.

Our December 1998 report was the first to be completed in response to the TEA-21 mandate that we periodically review and report on the implementation of the Job Access Program. We reported on DOT's preliminary steps and strategy for implementing the Job Access Program, noting that DOT's overall plan for implementing the program included distributing grant funds to as many areas throughout the United States as possible, subject to grant funding limits of $1 million for large urban areas and $150,000 for rural areas. DOT announced that it would use several criteria for selecting projects to fund, including a project's effectiveness in serving a demonstrated regional need; the degree of local coordination with other regional stakeholders demonstrated by the prospective grantee in designing and identifying funding for a project; and the project's financial plans and sustainability after the end of Job Access funding. An

[21]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Transportation's Role in Moving from Welfare to Work*, GAO/RCED-98-161 (Washington, D.C.: May 29, 1998).

[22]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Welfare Reform: Implementing DOT's Access to Jobs Program*, GAO/RCED-99-36 (Washington, D.C.: Dec., 8, 1998); *Implementing DOT's Access to Jobs Program in Its First Year*, GAO/RCED-00-14 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 26, 1999); *Welfare Reform: DOT Is Making Progress in Implementing the Job Access Program*, GAO-01-133 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 4, 2000); *Welfare Reform: GAO's Recent and Ongoing Work on DOT's Access to Jobs Program*, GAO-01-996R (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 17, 2001); and, *Welfare Reform: Competitive Grant Selection Requirement for DOT's Job Access Program Was Not Followed*, GAO-02-213 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 7, 2001).

application's compliance with these factors would be weighted for each factor, and DOT said that it would also award bonus points for innovative approaches to providing Job Access services. DOT also considered the geographic dispersion of projects in making award decisions. We noted that DOT made important efforts in attempting to establish communication channels with various federal welfare reform agencies through its role in a policy council that involved the White House and other agencies in formulating interagency policy decisions about the Job Access Program. DOT also formulated "Joint Guidance" with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Labor (Labor) on how the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and Welfare-to-Work Program funds[23] could be used as matching funds to help pay for Job Access projects. Regarding evaluation of the Job Access Program, DOT initially established four types of data it would collect from grantees in assessing the performance of Job Access grants and the Job Access Program: (1) the number of new and expanded transportation services (including data on service frequency, hours, and miles); (2) the number of jobs made accessible by the Job Access project; (3) the number of people using the new service; and (4) the level of collaboration achieved. We agreed that these were good measures for monitoring Job Access projects, but DOT still needed to measure the program's overall success by establishing programwide goals or benchmarks against which the cumulative data on new routes, new system users, and newly accessible jobs could be compared.

In November 1999, we reported on the implementation of the pProgram in fiscal year 1999, its first year. We found that DOT had implemented our second and third recommendations in carrying out TEA-21. Specifically, DOT had required grantees to coordinate transportation strategies with local job placement and other social service agencies and had worked with other federal agencies to coordinate welfare-to-work activities. DOT also had taken preliminary steps to implement our first recommendation that it establish specific objectives, performance criteria, and goals for measuring the program's progress. However, we also found that DOT's process for selecting Job Access grant proposals was not consistent in fiscal year 1999, and the basis for some selections was unclear.

[23]Labor's Welfare-to-Work Program provided $3 billion to states to help persons who are difficult to employ find work. The program was initially authorized for 2 years, then was extended for an additional 2 years, and was terminated at the end of fiscal year 2002.

Our December 2000 report examined DOT's implementation of the Program in fiscal year 2000. We found that DOT had taken steps to improve its process for selecting Job Access proposals. For example, to promote greater consistency in the evaluation and selection of grantees, DOT developed a standard format for reviewing Job Access proposals and provided more detailed guidance to its reviewers. Almost 90 percent of the fiscal year 1999 Job Access grantees that responded to our survey were satisfied with the goals and intent of the program.[24] However, 51 percent said that satisfying various standard FTA grant requirements took too long—about 9 months, on average. As a result, about one-third of respondents reported experiencing problems in obtaining matching funds. In addition, seven projects were withdrawn (about 4 percent of Job Access projects) for various reasons, including, in one case, the loss of matching funds. In this report, we note that DOT had implemented our recommendation that it develop specific objectives, performance criteria, and measurable goals for its Job Access Program evaluation. DOT developed a goal to increase new employment sites by 4,050 in fiscal year 2000, and 8,050 in fiscal year 2001, and it had requested specific data from the grantees.

Our August 2001 report provided our preliminary observations on (1) DOT's proposal to use a formula for allocating grant funds to the states, (2) the status of obligations for the Job Access Program, and (3) DOT's plans for reporting on the program to the Congress. First, DOT had proposed a change to the Job Access Program beginning in fiscal year 2002, under which it would allocate funding to the states via a formula, instead of to individual grantees. DOT proposed this change in response to language in the conference reports accompanying DOT's appropriations acts for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 that designated Job Access funding for specific states, localities, and organizations. Second, as of August 7, 2001, DOT had obligated 94 percent of the funds for fiscal year 1999, 67 percent of the funds for fiscal year 2000, and 20 percent of the funds for fiscal year 2001. Third, DOT officials had missed the June 2000 deadline for a status report to the Congress but expected to report instead in September 2001.

Our December 2001 report primarily addressed DOT's response to language in conference reports that accompanied its fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2001 appropriations statutes. The conference reports designated specific

[24]We surveyed grantees that were responsible for 194 Job Access projects and attained a response rate of 82 percent.

grantees that were to receive Job Access funding; these grants involved up to three-quarters of the appropriated funding for the Job Access Program in a fiscal year. DOT elected to award grants to the designated parties in a noncompetitive fashion; however, in doing so, it was not in compliance with the provisions of the authorizing legislation—TEA-21—because the act called for a competitive grant selection process. To address this finding, we recommended that DOT implement a competitive selection process for all prospective grantees, including those that were designated by language in conference reports. As a result of our recommendation, DOT announced that it would implement a competitive selection process for all grantees—congressional designated and otherwise.

On April 17, 2002, we testified on the Job Access Program before the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. We emphasized the need for DOT to evaluate the program as directed by TEA-21. We noted that, at the time of our testimony, DOT had no estimated date for issuing the required report. Further, we stated that DOT's use of employment sites as the sole measure of program success does not address key aspects of the program nor specifically relate to DOT's criteria for selecting Job Access grantees.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

For its first objective, this report examines the status of DOT's efforts to evaluate the Job Access Program and report to the Congress. For its second objective, the report discusses our findings about the Job Access Program's efforts to (1) provide transportation and related services to allow low-income people to reach employment and related opportunities; (2) increase collaboration in the design, financing, and delivery of the services of Job Access projects; and (3) foster the financial sustainability of the services delivered by Job Access projects after program funding terminates.

In responding to our first objective, we contacted FTA Program officials to discuss and document their efforts to evaluate the Program and to issue a report to the Congress. We monitored FTA's plans to evaluate the Program, including their proposal to utilize employment sites, and we queried Program officials about reasons for their delay in issuing the report to the Congress and plans for expediting completion of the evaluation. In addition, through our discussions with program officials, transportation and welfare reform experts, and national associations, we identified prospective measurements of program success and discussed the availability and appropriateness of those measurements for an evaluation of the Job Access Program.

In responding to our second objective, we examined the services delivered by Job Access projects in assisting low-income people access jobs and job-related services. Specifically, we followed up on our previous findings, observations, and recommendations from our reports; reviewed the agency's ongoing efforts to solicit, evaluate, and select Job Access grantees in fiscal year 2002; and examined DOT's ongoing implementation of existing grants and projects. Our November 1999 report contained an analysis of project data regarding the transportation-related services delivered by all 181 projects selected in fiscal year 1999. Those projects constitute over 80 percent of the projects that are still operating today. We used this information to supplement our discussion of the types of services funded through Job Access grants.

As part of the work for our second objective, we assessed whether the Job Access Program was increasing collaboration in the design, financing, and delivery of the services of Job Access projects—a program goal. We addressed the issue of collaborative project design, financing, and delivery in our survey of 173 Job Access grantees selected in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 that are still implementing Job Access projects. We also examined how the implementation of individual Job Access projects has been

integrated into the transportation and human service efforts of states and local communities by observing the interactions between grantees, metropolitan planning organizations, transit agencies, and human service agencies, such as those in the Albany, New York, area; the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area; the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area; the San Francisco Bay area; and the Louisville, Kentucky, area.

Meeting our second objective also required that we assess whether the Job Access Program was meeting a criterion for FTA's selection of Job Access projects—whether the projects could achieve financial sustainability of their services after program funding terminates. Our previous work on the Job Access Program showed that many projects might not be sustained if their Job Access funding terminated; therefore, our survey of Job Access grantees included questions about the likelihood of Job Access projects retaining their matching funds and continuing to operate. We also inquired about the prospects for projects' financial sustainability with the grantees we selected for site visits and discussed financial sustainability with Job Access Program officials, national associations, and welfare reform and transportation experts.

Finally, as part of our second objective, we examined the use of federal funds from other programs as matching funds for Job Access projects. Job Access Program regulations require that grantees obtain at least 50 percent of their project funding from non-DOT sources, which may include funding from federal sources such as the TANF Program and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-sponsored programs of Labor. We therefore reviewed policies affecting coordination and cost-sharing in federal programs, which included Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87, and we contacted DOT, HHS, and Labor officials about their efforts to refine the interagency "Joint Guidance" regarding matching funds for Job Access Program grants.

In addition, we selected and utilized three broad methodologies that addressed both objectives of our study. These methodologies included

- performing a detailed review of selected, ongoing Job Access projects at different locations;
- surveying all Job Access grantees selected during fiscal years 1999 and 2000; and
- consulting with nine welfare reform and transportation experts.

Review of Selected, Ongoing Job Access Projects

We performed detailed reviews of selected, ongoing Job Access projects at different locations. We selected these projects to represent the geographic dispersion of Job Access projects across the United States. In addition, we selected projects that served the different sizes of areas prescribed by the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Job Access administrative requirements: large urban areas, medium-size urban areas, and rural areas/small cities. These grantees provided different types of Job Access service delivery methods (e.g., carpools, fixed bus and van routes, demand-responsive transportation, and trip information and assistance). We visited the following:

- Grantees serving large cities:

1. Project Renewal (not-for-profit, community-based, organization, New York City).
2. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (transit agency, Washington, D.C.).
3. Maryland Transit Administration (statewide transit agency, Baltimore, Maryland).
4. Fort Worth Transit Authority (transit agency, Fort Worth, Texas).

- Grantees serving medium-size cities:

1. Capital District Transit Authority (transit agency, Albany, New York).
2. Santa Rosa City Department of Transit and Parking (transit agency, Santa Rosa, California).
3. Transit Authority of River City (transit agency, Louisville, Kentucky). City of Albuquerque Transit (transit agency, Albuquerque, New Mexico).

- Small cities and rural areas:

1. Good News Garage (community-based, not-for-profit, organization, Burlington, Vermont).
2. New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department (state DOT, Albuquerque, New Mexico).
3. Las Vegas Housing Department (public housing agency, Las Vegas, New Mexico).
4. California DOT (CALTRANS, state DOT, Sacramento, California).
5. Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (state transportation agency, Frankfort, Kentucky).

6. Alliance for Children and Families (not-for-profit organization, based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin).

At each location, we examined how Job Access services were delivered, how the design and delivery of Job Access services were coordinated with those of other transportation services and human service agencies in the area, and whether the grantees could financially sustain their services if Job Access funding terminated. The grant recipients that we visited included state and regional agencies that distributed Job Access funds to subgrantees and that made substantial efforts to coordinate those services to avoid duplicating ongoing transportation services that serve low-income people, including welfare recipients.

Survey of Job Access Grantees

We conducted a mail survey of all 173 Job Access grantees that were funded in fiscal years 1999 or 2000. (See app. IV for the survey results.) We did not survey the grantees selected in fiscal year 2001 because they did not have enough time to begin implementing their Job Access projects. Our survey addressed issues pertaining to the grantees' implementation of their projects, including costs, ridership, collaboration with other agencies, their financial ability to sustain services in the absence of Job Access funding, and their views on the usefulness of the program in addressing the transportation needs of low-income individuals. Our response rate, about 88 percent (152 respondents), can be generalized to the universe of all grantees funded in fiscal years 1999 and 2000.

Consultation with Welfare Reform and Transportation Experts

We consulted nine experts from academia, federal and state transportation and welfare programs, and national associations with backgrounds in the fields of welfare reform and transportation. They provided information and views on such matters as the strategy DOT used to implement the Job Access Program, the role of the Job Access Program in the national welfare reform effort, the overall effectiveness of the Program in serving low-income people, ways that the program could be improved, the sustainability of Job Access projects, and ways in which DOT could evaluate the program as required by TEA-21. We selected these experts on the basis of our review of transit and welfare reform literature and referrals from DOT, HHS, Labor, and national associations, such as the American Public Transportation Association.

Our work was performed from January 2002 through October 2002 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Services of Selected Job Access Grantees

To address the objectives of our review, we visited ongoing Job Access projects at different locations. At each location, we examined how Job Access services were delivered, how the design and delivery of Job Access services were coordinated with those of other transportation services and human service agencies in the area, and whether these projects could financially sustain their services if Job Access funding terminated. We selected these projects to represent the geographic dispersion of Job Access projects across the United States as well as the different sizes of areas prescribed by FTA's Job Access administrative requirements: large urban areas, medium-size urban areas, and rural areas/small cities.

The projects we visited, as well as their locations, the services they delivered, and the kinds of matching funds used, are summarized in table 3. Following table 3, we provide more detailed information on each project. The information contained in this text is based on interviews with project officials as well as project-specific documentation, including program and budget information.

Table 3: Information About Job Access Projects We Visited

Organization	Project	Location	Type of service	Job access funding
Alliance for Children and Families	Ways to Work	Milwaukee, WI	Car purchase/finance program with carpool requirement	FY 2000 - $1,000,000
California Department of Transportation	Agriculture Industry Transportation Services Pilot Project	Kings and Kern Counties, CA	Bus/Vanpool service	FY 2000 - $1,500,000 FY 2001 - $3,000,000
Capital District Transportation Authority	Transit to Jobs	Albany, NY	Van service on fixed routes	FY 2000 - $497,500 FY 2001 - $497,500
City of Albuquerque Transit	Albuquerque Transit Job Access Program	Albuquerque, NM	Demand-responsive van, rides for employment and transportation, training, vanpool, and reduced bus pass	FY 1999 - $325,000 FY 2000 - $1,000,000
City of Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa CityBus Route 15-Stony Point Route Extension Project	Santa Rosa, CA	Fixed route bus service	FY 1999 - $200,000 FY 2000 - $250,000
Fort Worth Transportation Authority	Fort Worth Transit	Fort Worth, TX	Demand-responsive vans and taxi service and fixed route bus service	FY 1999 - $175,0000
Good News Garage	CommuteShare	Burlington, VT	Demand-responsive rides and carpooling program	FY 2000 - $277,935
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet	Human Service Transportation Delivery System	Frankfort, KY	Demand-responsive trip brokerage system and fixed bus route	FY 2000 - $2,500,000
Las Vegas Housing Department	Las Vegas Housing Department Welfare-to-Work Program	Las Vegas, NM	Demand-responsive van service	FY 2000 - $40,798 FY 2001 - $54,386
Maryland Transit Administration	Maryland Job Access and Reverse Commute Program	Maryland (statewide)	Fixed route bus service, demand-responsive van service, and computer project to connect human service employment centers to a county transit internet site	FY 1999 - $2,119,880 FY 2000 - $3,000,000 FY 2001 - $2,394,720
Project Renewal	Suburban Jobs	New York, NY	Van service from city to suburb and return for clients transitioning to work	FY 1999 - $398,760 FY 2001 - $400,577
State of New Mexico	Transportation Toolkit	New Mexico (statewide)	Demand-responsive van service and extended fixed route	FY 1999 - $1,198,000 FY 2000 - $601,190 FY 2001 - $1,995,600
Transit Authority of River City	Access to Jobs Program	Louisville, KY	Fixed bus route and demand-responsive van service	FY 1999 - $1,032,938 FY 2001 - $1,097,400
Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority	Washington Region Access to Jobs Program	Washington, DC	Fixed route bus service, demand-responsive vanpools, and trip information brokering	FY 1999 - $1,350,000 FY 2000 - $650,000 FY 2001 - $998,000

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantees.

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Alliance for Children and Families (Subsidiary of Ways to Work) – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Ways to Work, a subsidiary of the Alliance for Children and Families, provides low-income people with loans of various sizes, ranging from $750 for car repairs up to $3,000 for the purchase of a used car. For its Job Access project, Ways to Work implemented a carpool project.

Low-income people that participate in Ways to Work volunteer to be in a carpool project with other participants. Ways to Work then coordinates the pool on the basis of home location and jobsite. While approximately three-fourths of borrowers received government aid at the time of their loan application, their use of public assistance dropped by 40 percent within 2 years, and less than 1 percent of borrowers became "new" users of public assistance since receiving their loans. Ways to Work officials stated that internal studies show that borrowers can average a 20 percent increase in household income. Currently, the Job Access project in Alabama is the only ongoing effort under this grant. These officials told us that Ways to Work is also applying for Job Access grants in other locations, such as New Philadelphia, Canton, and Akron, Ohio.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 4: Funding for Alliance for Children and Families Job Access Project

		Matching funds	
Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Source	Amount
2000	$1,000,000	Alabama Department of Human Resources	$540,000
		Alabama bank partnerships	338,800
		Ways to Work, Inc.	79,576
		Alabama Alliance for Children and Family Member Organization	41,624
Total	**$1,000,000**		**$1,000,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

Ways to Work has had different results with state DOTs. According to the president of Ways to Work, the relationship with the Alabama DOT was positive but slow. The Alabama DOT assisted Ways to Work by coordinating on behalf of Ways to Work with other state and local resources, such as human service agencies. However, according to Ways to Work's president, this coordination process was too slow because Ways to Work confronted Alabama's slow budget process. As a result, the Program experienced delays in being implemented. Local participants in the Job Access project did not have the cash flow to advance the project, but the funding was obtained from the Alabama DOT.

Sustainability

Ways to Work would reduce its carpool project if Job Access funds were no longer available, according to its president. Job Access funding expanded and strengthened the carpool project and Ways to Work overall. Ways to Work, however, has been in operation since 1984 and received most of its funding from foundations, banks, and other private funding resources; thus, it could find alternative funding sources to maintain the project. Moreover, as people repay the loans, Ways to Work can reuse the money, so that successful lending would help stretch funding out over many years. However, the carpool budget would be reduced, thereby reducing the scope of the project.

California Department of Transportation, Agriculture Industry Transportation Services – Kings County and Kerns County, California

In May 2001, the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) established the Agriculture Industry Transportation Services (AITS) pilot project in response to a series of accidents involving farm labor vehicles in the San Joaquin Valley—specifically, the death of 14 farm workers. Many workers had been using unlicensed and uninsured van service that charged passengers about $6 to $10 per day. The AITS pilot project was designed to improve access to safe public transportation for farm workers and their communities by providing expanded or new transit service in Fresno, Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties. There are two components of the project—first, the Kings County component, which encompasses the Fresno and Tulare Counties, and second, the Kerns County component. Service started in May 2002.

The Kings County component involves purchasing 134, 15-passenger vans. Residents in each of the targeted communities are trained to safely operate the vanpool vehicles. The operators of these vehicles both drive the vans and work at the agricultural fields and nearby packing facilities. Vanpool

fare for the pilot project is $50 per person, per month. In addition, the Kings County component involves purchasing 12, 28-passenger buses. Residents of the community operate the buses between the communities and nearby agricultural employment centers. Bus fare is $3 per person, per day, and service frequency varies (from 4 to 7 days a week), depending upon seasonal demand for labor. An average of 26 people per day are currently riding the first bus in operation in Kings County. The combined van and bus service costs each person about $5 per day.

The Kerns County component of the AITS Job Access project is an expansion of a fixed route bus service. Kern Regional Transit provided expansion of existing portions of the transit system. Previously, service consisted of one fixed route bus serving the Lamont/Weedpatch communities, one demand-responsive bus for those, and an intercity commuter bus linking Lamont with the Bakersfield area. Expansion of service under this Job Access project consists of a second intercity bus operating in the communities of Arvin, Weedpatch, and Lamont 6 days a week, with limited service provided on Sundays. An additional bus was placed into service for the Lamont/Weedpatch communities providing improved service for residents in the communities that required transit services to jobsites. Because the pilot project began operating in May 2002, data compilation and reporting of the project's success has not been completed. CALTRANS officials plan in the future to collect data on the number of agricultural workers who use the service to measure the success of the program.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project and the sources of matching funds and amounts.

Table 5: Funding for CALTRANS Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
2000	$1,500,000	State Public Transportation Account	$1,500,000
2001	3,000,000	State Public Transportation Account	2,500,000
Total	**$4,500,000**		**$4,000,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

CALTRANS was awarded $4.5 million for the AITS pilot project. According to CALTRANS officials, the $4.5 million was to be matched by funds from the State Public Transportation Account, derived from fuel tax revenue. However, the state did not fund the request for the additional $500,000 from the State Public Transportation Account to match the funding awarded in January 2001. Therefore, CALTRANS will only use $4 million of the total $4.5 million of Job Access funds.

Coordination

CALTRANS officials fostered collaboration with other agencies by conducting statewide workshops to explain the Job Access effort. They invited the regional transportation agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, and associated agencies to these workshops. According to CALTRANS officials, coordination efforts have faced some challenges, especially because of incompatible tracking systems. CALTRANS has only been able to track the total number of passengers, whereas the California Office of Health and Human Services is required to track the ridership of each individual TANF client. As a result, the Office of Health and Human Services has had difficulties providing TANF funds for the required Job Access match because they could not account for the number of TANF clients who specifically used the mass transit system.

Sustainability

CALTRANS officials said that the vans would continue to operate without Job Access funds. The fares paid by the passengers of the Kings County services are used for insurance, maintenance, fuel, vehicle replacement, overhead, and drivers' salaries. However, the bus service in Kern County would need to be funded with contributions from local governments or

other organizations to continue operation in the absence of Job Access funding.

Capital District Transportation Authority – Albany, New York

The Capital District Transportation Authority provides fixed route bus and van transit service as well as individualized trip planning and information brokering. The transit authority's Job Access funds are used to expand the hours of operation for their suburban services, primarily in Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady Counties. The extension allowed the transit authority to operate late night service as well as service during the weekend. As a result of its Job Access project, transit authority officials said they identified and filled gaps in its service by developing a system that provides a transportation solution for TANF clients who had difficulties getting to and from work. According to transit authority officials, specific projects being funded by Job Access are not for traditional fixed route bus services, so services are contracted to companies that use vans in all three counties. These services are paid for on a cost-per-trip basis. Taxis are also utilized to take some of the grantee's Job Access clients to and from work.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 6: Funding for Capital District Transit Authority Job Access Project

		Matching funds	
Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Source	Amount
1999	$497,500	New York State Department of Labor	$900,000
2001	497,500	New York State Department of Labor	3,400,000
Total	**$995,000**		**$4,300,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

Transit authority officials said that the Job Access Program has helped improve the coordination between transit and human service agencies. According to grantee officials, as part of the Job Access grant process, the

transit authority established a relationship with the New York State Department of Labor, which created a link to local human service agencies and made transportation more accessible for TANF clients while broadening their client focus.

However, coordinating the implementation of the Job Access project between the grantee and various stakeholders has been complicated by differences in reporting requirements between these parties and by the volume of data that has to be collected. To conform with TANF reporting requirements, the grantee has had to collect data it does not normally collect for the numbers of TANF recipients that use the Job Access service. Grantee officials explained that they had difficulties accounting for their ridership along with determining if their passengers are TANF clients. In addition, according to these officials, private and nonprofit organizations operate their own transportation vans and have services that overlap with Capital District Transportation Authority services in some areas. Some of these other agencies operating in the community include the following: the Department of Aging Markets, the Association of Retarded Citizens, the Veterans Administration, and the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Transit authority officials stated that better coordination among these services could result in a more efficient transportation network.

Sustainability

Capital District Transportation Authority officials said that their agency's sources of revenue are limited, and that without Job Access funding, they would be unable to continue the services started under the Program. The officials stated that the need to provide transportation during weekends and second and third shifts has produced a greater need for heavier subsidies. However, many counties are feeling a budget squeeze, resulting in less funding being available to contribute to the match necessary to obtain FTA Job Access funding.

City of Albuquerque Transit Job Access Services – Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Albuquerque Transit Department has seven Job Access projects that include demand-responsive rides for work, job training, or transportation emergencies; subsidized vanpools; reduced price bus passes; a free 1-day bus pass available for job-training trips; a free 6-month bus pass for social service agency staff who volunteer to be travel trainers for their clients; and a mobility manager service that teaches people how to utilize bus schedules, ride buses, and use other transit services. The demand-responsive services are available to anyone at or below 150 percent of the poverty level. Participants are offered 120 round-trips within 2 years to their jobs, job-related training, and child care required for their jobs and/or job-related training. Participants can only utilize the services to these designated trips if they lack (1) a local bus stop within a quarter-mile of their home or destination, (2) a local bus service that duplicates the route in less than 90 minutes, and (3) a local bus service that is available to their destination. Albuquerque Transit officials estimate that on-demand van services cost about $17.50 per ride; eligible participants pay 75 cents per trip.

Albuquerque Transit officials stated that, on the basis of qualitative measures, their project is successful. The agency has tried to measure the success of the Program by obtaining community feedback. This feedback has indicated that the communities like the projects and feel that the services were long overdue, according to transit officials. Although it does not have exact numbers, the grantee claims that the project is helping to reduce the welfare rolls, and that overall ridership is increasing. In the first 3 months of 2002, the Job Access project had 120 riders, according to Albuquerque Transit officials.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 7: Funding for City of Albuquerque Transit Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
1999	$325,000	New Mexico Human Service Department	$250,000
		Bernalillo County, New Mexico	50,000
		Commission on the Status of Women	25,000
2000	1,000,000	City of Albuquerque	450,000
		New Mexico Human Service Department	450,000
		University of New Mexico	100,000
Total	**$1,325,000**		**$1,325,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

Albuquerque Transit has had mixed results coordinating with other agencies. The project successfully involved about 95 organizations in the Job Access project. The project has obtained matching funds from the City of Albuquerque, the New Mexico Human Service Department, and the University of New Mexico Career Works. Coordination efforts, however, have faced some challenges. The biggest barriers to coordinating human service activities with transit services stemmed from different agency cultures for complying with services standards for clients, according to transit officials. They said transportation providers do not speak the same language as human service providers because the two have different missions and philosophies. The officials said that compliance with all of the requirements to acquire matching funds is also a barrier because human service agencies usually only provide funds under certain conditions, such as are not paying for nonclients. Consequently, the transit agency has spent considerable financial resources tracking the number of TANF clients using Job Access project services.

Sustainability

According to transit officials, Albuquerque's project requires some sort of public assistance and support to exist. Without Job Access funding, they would no longer be able to provide the services created under the project.

The grantee officials are unsure of what they would do if the funds stopped or the Job Access Program was not reauthorized. Furthermore, they do not expect the state to fill the funding void—New Mexico is one of four states that provide no state funds for public transit.

City of Santa Rosa Citybus – Santa Rosa, California

Santa Rosa, California, is a rapidly growing metropolitan area that is approximately 55 miles north of San Francisco, in Sonoma County. Santa Rosa's City Department of Transit and Parking (Santa Rosa CityBus) operates 16 bus routes, most emanating from the transit center in the downtown area. Santa Rosa CityBus's Job Access project established a new public transit route, Route 15–Stony Point Road, in August 1999. This new transit route serves the highest concentration of TANF recipients in Santa Rosa, and it links job seekers with multiple job opportunity worksites (e.g., light industry and telecommunications) and human service agencies. According to Santa Rosa CityBus officials, Route 15 has decreased the travel time of route users because it eliminates unnecessary transfers through the downtown area. The cross-town route, extending over 15 miles, requires about 1 hour to make a round-trip and uses two buses. The service is available to the general public and all passengers pay the same fare. However, the local health and human services agency (SonomaWorks) purchases monthly bus passes at the regular price and provides them at no cost to TANF participants. Transit officials estimate that the route will service about 132,000 people in fiscal year 2002.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 8: Funding for City of Santa Rosa CitiBus Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
1999	$200,000	MTC, State TDA	$300,000
2000	250,000	MTC, State TDA	250,000
		MTC, State LIFT[a]	250,000
2001	0	MTC, State LIFT	250,000
		State TDA	250,000
2002	0	MTC, State LIFT	250,000
		MTC, State TDA	250,000
Total	**$450,000**		**$1,800,000**

Legend:

LIFT Low-Income Flexible Transportation
MTC Metropolitan Transportation Commission
TDA Transportation Development Act

[a]LIFT funds include 50 percent Job Access funding through a state grant.

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

Santa Rosa CityBus officials worked closely with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the area's metropolitan planning organization, to develop and acquire funding for Route 15. MTC worked on a plan that identified the regional shortfalls of existing transportation services in terms of areas covered and times served. MTC also helped gather the background information and produced Geographic Information Systems maps, which plotted the TANF population that needed to be served in the City of Santa Rosa. This allowed Santa Rosa and transportation commission officials to identify the service gaps in Santa Rosa and the areas where the highest concentration of TANF recipients lived. Because of this collaboration, Santa Rosa CityBus was able to provide a route linking low-income people to the resources they need, such as jobs, child care, and health care.

The Job Access Program has also improved collaboration between Santa Rosa CityBus and the local health and human service agency officials. SonomaWorks officials, with the assistance of Santa Rosa CityBus staff, trained local health and human services' caseworkers to better inform their

clients about all services being provided by Santa Rosa CityBus--specifically, Route 15. However, Santa Rosa officials did not discuss using TANF funds as a match with SonomaWorks. Santa Rosa officials stated that they were aware that the Job Access Program allowed for a federal-to-federal funds match, but they chose not to pursue the possibility of using TANF funds because they did not face any difficulties in raising the matching funds.

Sustainability

Currently there is no plan to discontinue service in the absence of Job Access funding. Santa Rosa CityBus officials stated that even if the Job Access Program were discontinued, Route 15 would continue to operate. They added that it would be virtually impossible to discontinue any established transit line because the transit users in the community depend on these services. The goal of the Santa Rosa CityBus was to use Job Access funding to assist in the establishment of the route. They expect the route to be self-sustaining without Job Access funds.

Fort Worth Transportation Authority – Fort Worth, Texas

Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) is the primary public transportation system for the city of Fort Worth, Texas. With the use of the Job Access grant, FWTA employed a vanpool for the city's outlying areas and contracted with a taxi company to provide demand-responsive service to its clients within the Fort Worth area. Officials at FWTA identified their target population as TANF recipients and people with incomes at or below 150 percent of the poverty level. They stated that their project has resulted in individuals finding jobs and maintaining employment. They said that they provided transportation services for 6 months, in the belief that if a person is employed for that period of time, the person has increased his or her chances of being hired again. As a result of the Job Access project, FWTA officials said they have been able to help some people transition from welfare to work by providing them with transportation to and from work, daycare, and other services.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 9: Funding for Fort Worth Transportation Authority Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
1999	$175,000	Fort Worth Transportation Authority[a]	$50,000
		Workforce Investment Board	50,000
		City of Fort Worth	50,000
		Fort Worth Housing Authority	25,000
Total	**$175,000**		**$175,000**

[a]FWTA also received a Job Access grant for $240,000 for fiscal year 2001. According to an FWTA official, the project would consist of expanding fixed-route bus service on two major routes through the city. However, budgetary constraints prevented the authority from providing the 50 percent match at this time. According to the official, the project may yet be implemented as the FTWA's financial condition changes.

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

FWTA officials have been reluctant to consult and coordinate with other stakeholders, such as other transit agencies and human service agencies, to receive assistance in operating their Job Access project because of their negative experience in obtaining matching funds from other stakeholders. They explained that they experienced a significant administrative burden in complying with the data collection and reporting requirements imposed by those stakeholders. Specifically, in the early days of the project when seeking financial contributions from other partners, they encountered problems in receiving TANF and other matching funds, because of the significant reporting requirements imposed by those funding sources. Although FWTA officials received the required matching funds, they concluded that they would rather have its partners provide noncash contributions since those contributions would not result in any administrative requirements. FWTA officials are now reluctant to request any operating assistance from other stakeholders.

Sustainability

FWTA officials said that their project could not be continued without Job Access funds and would require additional assistance and support for it to continue. FWTA spends about $11.50 on its demand-responsive taxi

service. The cost per trip averages about $17.50 because of the shared ride nature of each family trip. These costs are comparable to taxi rides provided on a zone basis. For rides on its fixed route services, FWTA assumes almost all of the $20 per ride costs of providing the transit services, charging an average of only 50 cents per trip. According to FWTA officials, their agency has no dedicated funding stream for the Job Access services and the fares they collect are not enough to continue their Job Access project in the absence of FTA funding.

Good News Garage, Commuteshare – Burlington, Vermont

CommuteShare is the Job Access project component of the Good News Garage–a nonprofit association that repairs used vehicles and provides them to economically disadvantaged applicants. The Good News Garage donates some of its vehicles to CommuteShare for one carpool service and four demand-responsive services. Under the carpool service, a driver keeps the vehicle and provides rides to three other participants. The demand-responsive service has an assigned volunteer-driver take people to work upon request. CommuteShare services are free and available to any person whose household income is less than 225 percent of the federal poverty level. Individuals receiving case-managed services have free access to the vehicle for 6 months. After that, there is a sliding fee scale fee that is based on income. Carpool group members split the cost of fuel and parking, while demand-responsive passengers each pay a $1 fuel contribution. One-way rides cost CommuteShare roughly $16—this includes all operating expenses, such as fuel, insurance, and repairs. About 190 people have participated in the program, with 25 people participating at any given time.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the source of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 10: Funding for Good News Garage Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
2000	$277,935	PATH	$277,935
Total	**$277,935**		**$277,935**

Legend: PATH Vermont Department of Prevention Assistance, Transition, and Health Access (state funds)

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

Good News Garage and CommuteShare have enjoyed strong coordination with other agencies, according to project administrators. Lutheran Social Services, the nonprofit association that is based in New England that created the Good News Garage, aligned the Garage with the Vermont Department of Prevention Assistance, Transition, and Health Access (PATH)—the state TANF clearinghouse—and the Vermont Department of Employment and Training. Most Good News Garage and CommuteShare referrals come from PATH. The Good News Garage also receives referrals from local battered women's shelters. It used PATH state funds to satisfy its matching funds requirements.

According to a PATH official, CommuteShare and PATH have coordinated effectively in the overall welfare-to-work effort. PATH helps the Good News Garage and CommuteShare clients pay for repairs or get them to work if their car is not working. The support lasts 1 year and thereafter, is no longer continued. The PATH official added that positive experiences with demand-responsive service have resulted in plans to expand such projects. PATH wants to have at least one car in each of Vermont's 12 districts for demand-responsive service.

Sustainability

CommuteShare officials are not sure if the project can maintain operations in the absence of Job Access funding. Because of a tight budget cycle, Vermont may not be able to supplement the required match—making a loss of Job Access funding critical to the projects sustainability. According to project administrators, the project has some support from the private sector but needs strong public funding to maintain services. Grantee officials said that CommuteShare appears to be a successful and innovative

Job Access project but may have problems sustaining itself after the end of Job Access funding.

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet – Frankfort, Kentucky

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Human Service Transportation Delivery project involved consolidating transportation services previously provided by various state governmental agencies to transport Medicaid and low-income people to job interviews, job training, employment, and child care facilities. According to cabinet officials, services were consolidated because the previous transportation delivery process was fragmented, increasingly costly, and vulnerable to fraud and abuse. Kentucky's welfare reform initiative was expected to double transportation needs for TANF recipients. In addition, transportation services were not easily accessible in some rural areas. For example, in an 11-county region in Southeast Kentucky, an average of 32.5 percent of the households were living in poverty, while an estimated 46,977 people over the age of 60 and 13,570 households did not have access to an automobile. As a result, the cabinet began a statewide demand-responsive service program. Seniors and low-income passengers needing transportation could contact 1 of the 14 regional transportation brokers within 72 hours of their trip.[25]

Although the cabinet targets low-income people, the project is open to the public. The service costs 50 cents to $1 for low-income individuals and the general public. The Kentucky Cabinet for Family and Children Services pays for TANF recipients' fares. According to cabinet officials, the Job Access project is efficient and a major improvement from past welfare reform efforts. The brokerage system resulted in more people taking more trips at less cost. As of June 2002, the project has provided 549,914 trips for TANF recipients and 330,596 trips for those participating in Medicaid. Under the Job Access project, revenue projections indicate that reductions in expenditures will result in a Medicaid savings of $3 million annually.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

[25]Brokers are a combination of human service agencies, transit departments, and private contractors such as taxis.

Table 11: Funding for Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
2000	$2,500,000	Kentucky Department of Children and Family Services	$1,000,000
		Combined contribution of local communities	1,000,000
		Kentucky State Transportation Funds	500,000
Total	**$2,500,000**		**$2,500,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet coordinated with the Cabinet for Family and Children Services,[26] local communities, human service agencies, transit departments, and private transportation operators to implement its Job Access project. According to grantee officials, the Transportation Cabinet also relied heavily on local community support. Local areas provided 40 percent of the necessary match and were excited that the needed services were to start, according to the cabinet official. The project also required coordination from the 14 different transportation brokers. One such broker, the Kentucky River Foothills, estimates that 95 percent of the clients it transports have incomes that are less than or equal to 150 percent of the official federal poverty income threshold, and 65 percent to 70 percent earn less income than the official federal poverty level. According to Kentucky River Foothills officials, the biggest obstacle to coordination is convincing localities to invest in public transportation.

Sustainability

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet officials estimate that about half its services can be sustained in the absence of Job Access funding. The services most likely to survive would be those that have the strongest community and employment ties. For example, in one region, a chicken

[26]The Department of Family and Children Services, however, discontinued their funding of this project as of July 1, 2002, because their state budget for transportation services decreased from $8 million to $3 million.

factory depends on low-income labor. The factory would most likely support the Job Access service to keep its workers.

Housing Department – Las Vegas, New Mexico

The Las Vegas Housing Department's Job Access project—a subgrantee of the New Mexico State Highway Transportation Department—is a continuation of a welfare-to-work project run by Highlands University. According to the housing director, the university's project was not working very well because it lacked an effective transportation component. When the Job Access project began, the Las Vegas housing director took on the responsibilities of transportation coordinator and organized a new welfare-to-work project. The new project leveraged funds from a variety of sources, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and DOT, and had an existing clientele. The city's Housing Department also provided the city Transportation Department with a facility to enhance their coordination. The Las Vegas project is open to the public and provides demand-responsive van service during the traditional workweek. Although the project is targeted to those who are low-income, anyone can utilize the service. Las Vegas has a sliding scale for the service costs; the general public pays a general cost (about $1.50), those who are below 30 percent of the county median-income level—60 percent of their participants meet this criteria—pay 75 cents (after applying through the local TANF office at Highlands University), and residents of the housing department can access the service for free. The van service requires 24-hour notice to schedule rides and can be used to travel to work, child care, and retail locations as well as other purposes. According to the Las Vegas housing director, the Las Vegas Housing Department's project is a success; ridership has doubled in 3 years and housing participants have improved their lives.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 12: Funding for Las Vegas, New Mexico, Housing Department Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
2000	$40,798.00	New Mexico Department of Labor	$20,399.00
		New Mexico Human Service Department	20,399.00
2001	54,386.00	New Mexico Department of Labor	27,193.50
		New Mexico Human Service Department	27,193.50
Total	**$95,184.00**		**$95,185.00**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

The housing director was also able to use HUD's Drug Elimination grant funds to help fund the project because the services included taking teens to after-school activities. The grantee did not use DOT funds for rural transportation as matching funds for the project, but it did use them to purchase vans for the service.

Coordination

According to the housing director, the project is an excellent example of coordination between local, state, and federal agencies. Highlands University is the human service provider and is receiving welfare-to-work money from Labor's Welfare-to-Work Program. The state's Department of Labor runs the TANF Program and also is providing matching funds. The state Department of Labor has increased its number of vans from three to five, and the department's director said he is starting to receive interest from other rural communities looking to replicate the project.

Sustainability

According to project officials, the project cannot exist without public support, particularly Job Access funds. The housing director argued for the need to have continued federal funding of the Job Access project. The housing director stated that clients need to have flexible and free or cheap service, or else they will purchase a car. However, buying an old car makes it harder for clients to develop financial independence, because the costs of maintaining such a car are burdensome. The director added that Job

Access and other welfare-to-work services fail because people who purchase a car do not have enough remaining funds to pay for non-work-related automobile trips and to pay for such necessities as child care, food, and clothing.

Maryland Transit Administration Job Access and Reverse Commute Program – Annapolis, Maryland

The Maryland Transit Administration's (MTA) project serves as a broker for transportation funds throughout the state. Much of its Job Access funding is applied toward demand-responsive services, but several subprojects serve existing public service routes. MTA solicits subprojects for its Jobs Access project by mailing applications, advertisements, and guidelines to Maryland localities. MTA uses performance indicators and standards to grant both awards and award amounts.

Funding

The following table describes Job Access subprojects funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 13: Funding for the Maryland Transit Administration Job Access Program

		Matching funds	
Fiscal year of funding	Job Access program funding	Source	Amount
1999	$2,119,880	Maryland (state)	$391,250
		Maryland DOT for Montgomery County	200,000
		Maryland Department of Human Resources/Local Department of Social Services	667,375
		Upper Shore Private Industry Council	15,000
		Baltimore Enterprise Zone/Abell Foundation	285,880
		Housing Authority of Baltimore City	200,000
		Local governments	165,375
		Historical East Baltimore Community Action Coalition	150,000

(Continued From Previous Page)

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
		Anne Arundel Econ. Development Corp	45,000
2000	3,000,000	Maryland (state)	854,679
		Maryland DOT for Montgomery County	405,000
		Maryland Department of Human Resources/Local Department of Social Services	2,767,688
		Upper Shore Private Industry Council	20,000
		Baltimore Enterprise Zone/Abell Foundation	109,844
		Housing Authority of Baltimore City	100,000
		Local governments	515,476
		Historical East Baltimore Community Action Coalition	75,000
		Anne Arundel Econ. Development Corp	151,242
		Frederick County One-Stop	33,000
		Mills Corporation	109,615
2001	2,394,720	Maryland (state)	997,179
		Maryland Department of Human Resources/Local Department of Social Services	2,551,469
		Baltimore Enterprise Zone/Abell Foundation	300,063
		Local governments	347,389
		Anne Arundel Econ. Development Corp	228,990
		Mills Corporation	149,004
		Chesapeake College	15,000
Total	**$7,514,600**		**$11,850,518**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

According to MTA officials, the Job Access Program has encouraged greater collaboration and coordination between the transportation agency and human service organizations at the state and local level. MTA officials said that through an executive order, the Governor established the State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation to encourage state agencies to identify needs and develop strategies to ensure the coordination of human services transportation. This committee facilitated MTA's ability to market the Job Access project to other state agencies. In addition, MTA mapped out all transportation projects across the state and extended its outreach efforts to the local level. MTA officials credited the Jobs Access Program with helping to formulate and standardize coordination between transit and social service agencies in providing transportation services to low-income people.

Sustainability

Officials at MTA stressed the importance of having the state's administration support public transit that has facilitated other state and local agencies supporting the Job Access Program. According to MTA officials, several factors contributed to their success. These officials said that Maryland's existing transportation services (1) do not serve areas that are too rural, remote, or small; (2) are supported by the state legislature; and (3) are supported by the public. Moreover, MTA created its own set of guidelines that would help the sustainability of its programs. MTA officials added that state legislation required that at least 25 percent of the required match toward FTA transportation funds—including Job Access grants—would be paid by the state. These officials said that this legislation also requires that a portion of the matching funding be automatically included in the state's transportation budget and provided a total of $503 million over a 6-year period. They said that were not sure if they would be able to maintain all of the services they have started without continued Job Access funding.

Project Renewal, Suburban Jobs – New York City

Under its Job Access grant, Project Renewal—a rehabilitation center for homeless men and women—operates a Suburban Jobs Program that places formerly homeless New Yorkers in unsubsidized employment by identifying and securing job opportunities in suburban areas around New York City. Suburban Jobs vans travel daily to five worksites, carrying an average of about 150 people daily, and has an average employment retention rate of 81 percent. At Montclair State University—one of the project's five worksites—participants account for up to 75 percent of the

university's nonfaculty staffing, according to University personnel. Each position at the University has a training element and promotional opportunity.

Project Renewal's housing facilities as well as other nonprofit employment programs refer qualified candidates for Suburban Jobs. All candidates are screened to ensure that they have undergone vocational education and job readiness training. Project Renewal then identifies appropriate employment opportunities, prepares clients for interviews, and supplements public transportation through its own van service to the suburban jobsites. Vans are necessary since public transportation, even in a transit-rich city like New York, was not designed for reverse commutes during nontraditional work shifts, according to project officials. Personal counseling is provided to Suburban Jobs beneficiaries while they are being transferred to and from the jobsite. Including capital and operating expenditures, the rides cost Project Renewal about $15 per person.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 14: Funding for the Project Renewal Suburban Jobs Project

		Matching funds	
Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Source	Amount
1999	$398,760	Department of Housing and Urban Development	$398,760
2002	400,577	Department of Housing and Urban Development	400, 577
Total	**$799,337**		**$799,337**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

Project Renewal has worked closely with its metropolitan planning organization —the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council—and has coordinated with other agencies. The Metropolitan Transportation Council supports Project Renewal by providing guidance for improving and starting new routes. For its required Job Access matching funds, Project Renewal utilized HUD funds. Project Renewal also partners with dozens of

agencies and does not ask them to help pay for the transportation costs of Suburban Jobs beneficiaries.

Sustainability

According to project officials, Suburban Jobs would likely not exist without Job Access funding. However, in the absence of DOT funding, the managers of the project would attempt to continue the services currently funded by DOT by soliciting greater contributions from employers. For example, Montclair State University currently contributes about $300 monthly for the service, and other employers might be persuaded to contribute also.

State of New Mexico, Transportation Toolkit and Rural Job Access

The New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department developed a statewide "Transportation Toolkit" to coordinate welfare-to-work resources and to administer rural Job Access services. The Toolkit contains several databases of the inventory of vehicles that were purchased through publicly funded programs and TANF households by zip code. The Toolkit helps agencies prepare TANF adults for employment: A TANF adult will be referred, as needed, to appropriate resources, which may be in different geographic locations. These resources include counseling for substance abuse, mental illness, and domestic violence; classes in parenting, life skills, and job preparation; and programs to improve literacy and/or to obtain a general equivalency diploma.

The State Highway and Transportation Department also solicits and awards Job Access grants to rural areas. New Mexico has 22 state Job Access projects, 18 of which combine resources from DOT's funds for rural transportation. Most of the Job Access projects are demand-responsive, which makes tracking the number of rides easier. Participants call 24 hours in advance to request a trip. These services are available to the general public as well as low-income and TANF recipients. New Mexico promotes the services to the general public through local advertisements and to targeted clients through referrals from local human service agencies.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 15: Funding for the New Mexico Transportation Toolkit and Rural Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
1999	$1,198,000	New Mexico Department of Labor	$1,700,000
2000	601,190	New Mexico Human Service Department (FY 2000 and 2001)	2,700,000
2001	1,995,600		0
Total	**$3,794,790**		**$4,400,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

According to the Highway and Transportation's Chief of Programs, the Toolkit has resulted in remarkable coordination of transportation resources. Responsible state and local agencies, such as the highway, labor, and social development offices, use the Toolkit to determine the most effective transportation mode to transport low-income and TANF people to employment. The Toolkit helps localities determine (1) where TANF recipients reside, (2) the inventory of vehicles that were purchased through publicly funded programs, and (3) where jobs are located for the entire state. The chief of highway programs stated that the Toolkit is intended to avoid duplication of services and helps localities determine if the vehicles that were purchased through publicly funded programs were available for welfare to work. In addition, the Job Access projects utilized matching funds from the New Mexico Department of Labor and Human Service Department.

Sustainability

The State Highway and Transportation Department believes the projects can exist without Job Access funding. New Mexico uses self-sustainability as a selection criterion in determining grantees; the state Highway and Transportation department has been in constant discussion with subgrantees about finding a way to fund their projects without Job Access money. Highway and Transportation Department officials said they believe that the Human Service Department will continue to fund the Job Access service even if the federal Job Access Program is not reauthorized by the Congress.

Transit Authority of River City – Louisville, Kentucky

Through its Job Access project, the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) offers a variety of services to low-income people:

- The Night Owl bus offers demand-responsive transportation for $1.50 each way to those who live and work in Louisville's Jefferson County.
- A Flex-Route deviates from a fixed-path bus route whenever a person living near the route needs to access the bus service.
- The Job Hunter bus provides free, demand-responsive service for transporting potential employees to interviews and career development opportunities. The Job Hunter Bus has transported over 3,500 people since 1999.
- In coordination with the United Parcel Service, two bus routes transport students and low-income workers to the United Parcel Service's worldwide hub in Louisville.
- A demand-responsive rideshare service to disabled workers.
- Three fixed route bus services—one for teenagers seeking jobs and two for taking employees to Blue Grass Industrial Park—a large employment site.
- A Bikes on Board project placed bike racks on 208 buses. This allows people to travel from the end of the bus route to their place of employment and back.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 16: Funding for the Transit Authority of River City Job Access Project

Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding	Matching funds	
		Source	Amount
1999 to 2001[a]	$2,130,338	City of Jeffersontown	$180,000
		United Parcel Service	153,000
		Kentuckiana Works	435,000
		Others	2,000
		TARC	1,360,338
Total	**$2,130,338**		**$2,130,338**

[a]Grantee received $1,032,938 in fiscal year 1999 and $1,097,400 in fiscal year 2001.

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

Coordination

TARC collaborated with 43 different private, public, and nonprofit agencies in developing its Job Access project. TARC also has a kiosk located in the Workforce Investment Board One-Stop Center, which provides unemployed persons with job placement and training services.

Sustainability

TARC has integrated the Job Access services into its general services. TARC officials said they would evaluate the efficiency of all their routes and cut the least efficient if the agency lost its Job Access funding. Currently, however, 80 percent of their ridership is in their top five routes—none of which are Job Access services. Thus, services funded through the Job Access project may be among those that could be eliminated.

Washington Metropolitan Area Job Access Services

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) provides fixed route bus and rail service for Washington, D.C., and surrounding areas. In its Job Access grant, WMATA provides three types of services: (1) a trip brokerage service, (2) improved access to fixed bus routes, and (3) a demand-responsive van service.

WMATA found that some clients faced problems in getting to and from work during nontraditional work hours—for example, late-night or early

morning hours. Due to a lack of transportation, these employees face a difficult time maintaining employment. As a result, under its Job Access grant, WMATA began in 1999 a trip brokerage system that allows its clients to reserve transportation services for odd hours and in areas that are underserved by traditional public transit services. According to WMATA officials, their program has been able to serve thousands of individuals every month. WMATA's demand-responsive component incurs a cost of about $46 per trip, with no costs to the client.

In addition to the trip brokerage system, WMATA implements a fixed-route component of its Job Access Program. While the fixed route service costs an average of $41.68 per ride, passengers pay a fare of roughly $1.75 (both the Job Access client and general public pay this amount). With just over 330 trips per month on fixed bus routes, WMATA's Job Access project has been able to provide service to about 9,500 individuals.

WMATA also established a one-stop information center—the Washington Regional Call Center—that allows people to access exact trip information to various locations.

Funding

The following table describes the Job Access Program funding for this project as well as the sources of matching funds and the amounts.

Table 17: Funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Job Access Services

		Matching funds	
Fiscal year of funding	Job Access Program funding[a]	Source	Amount
1999	$1,350,000	United People's Organization	$200,000
		Washington, DC, Dept. of Employment Services	300,000
		Virginia Department of Human Services	195,000
		Fairfax County Department of Family Services	180,000
		Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission	140,000
		Fairfax County (Gen. Govt.)	350,000
2000	650,000	Washington, DC, Dept. of Employment Services	300,000
		Fairfax County Department of Family Services	180,000
		Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission	127,000
		Virginia Department of Human Services	195,000
2001	998,000	Washington, DC, Dept. of Employment Services	300,000
		People's Involvement Corporation	267,000
		Fairfax County Department of Family Services	225,000
		Potomac Rappahannock Transportation Commission	200,000
Total	**$2,998,000**		**$3,159,000**

Source: Federal Transit Administration and grantee.

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Coordination

According to WMATA officials, the Job Access Program increased their coordination with human service agencies and others in their service area because it was designed to address problems related to low-income people getting transportation services. As the most prevalent transit provider for the Washington metropolitan area, WMATA and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Transportation Planning were the regional catalysts for getting transportation and social services together to provide Job Access services. According to WMATA officials, WMATA has been able to leverage its status as the region's primary transit provider to encourage the involvement of other regional transit systems as well as human service agencies across two states, Washington, D.C., and multiple local jurisdictions. In addition, WMATA has been able to use the information and outreach component of its Job Access project to promote the use of transit programs throughout the region. WMATA has been able to direct welfare clients to utilize more timely and efficient public transit routes to and from work, thereby enabling individuals to get to work on time and keep their jobs. Consequently, WMATA officials noted that employers have begun to take notice of the WMATA Job Access project because it has produced a dependable form of transportation for their employees. WMATA is currently working with the Washington, D.C., Board of Trade and Chamber of Commerce to encourage more public and private collaborations in serving low-income populations.

Sustainability

WMATA officials said they would not be able to sustain services started with Job Access funding if they did not continue to receive grants. They believe that theirs is a model program, but they have not been able to encourage sufficient private sector involvement in the program to replace Job Access funds.

Survey of Job Access Grantees

GAO
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U.S. General Accounting Office

Survey of Job Access Grantees

Introduction

The General Accounting Office (GAO) is an agency of the Congress that performs studies of federal programs. The Transportation Equity Act has mandated the GAO for the 21st Century (TEA-21) to periodically examine how the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is implementing the Access to Jobs Program (Job Access/Reverse Commute Program).

To obtain perspectives on this program, we are asking organizations that were selected to receive project grants from the Access to Jobs Program to complete this questionnaire. It covers a variety of topics including the funding grantees have received under this program.

Instructions

Please review the label above and respond to the questions in this questionnaire as they relate to the project named. If you have a question about the information on the label or it is incorrect, please call one of the GAO contact persons listed below.

In addition, when responding to these questions, please coordinate with the members of your staff as well as any sub-recipients or sub-grantees, as appropriate.

Please complete the questionnaire and return it to the address below within 10 working days of receipt. We have provided a postage-paid business reply envelope to facilitate the return of your questionnaire. If the return envelope is misplaced, please send or fax your completed questionnaire to:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Attn: Frank Taliaferro
200 W. Adams Street, Suite 700
Chicago, Illinois 60606-5219

FAX #: (312) 220-7726

If you have any questions, please call Frank Taliaferro on (312) 220-7715 (e-mail: taliaferrof@gao.gov) or Josephine Perez on (312) 220-7626 (e-mail: perezj@gao.gov.) Your response, along with the others we receive, will be used in our report to the Congress on this program.

Thank you for your help.

Please provide the following information for the person we should contact if we have any questions.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

(Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding).

GAO Control # : (N=152)

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General Information About Your Project

1. What is the name and address of the grant recipient for this Job Access project?

   (N=152) _____

   _____

   _____

2. Which of the following would best characterize your organization? (*Please check one.*) (N=151)

   1. [15%] State Department of Transportation
   2. [1%] State Human Service Department
   3. [20%] Regional transit agency
   4. [34%] Local transit agency
   5. [1%] Local government human service office
   6. [7%] Other local government (city/county)
   7. [5%] Nonprofit human service organization
   8. [0%] Private organization
   9. [0%] Public housing authority
   10. [17%] Other (*Please specify*)

   _____

3. How does this Job Access project (your organization or sub-grantee) primarily provide transportation services (including mobility manager services) to program participants? (*Please check one.*) (N=145)

   1. [34%] Uses a combination of direct transportation service, contractors, or vouchers.
   2. [41%] Provides transportation services directly to program participants
   3. [14%] Hires companies to provide services such as bus, van, or taxi
   4. [1%] Provides vouchers to participants to obtain transportation to work
   5. [10%] Other *(Please specify)*

   _____

4. Currently, about how many passengers per month does your Job Access project serve? (*Enter number; if none, enter '0'*) (N=135)

   (Range: 0 – 257,856 passengers)
   (Median: 1,880 passengers)
   (Mean: 11,079 passengers)

   _____ passengers per month

5. What types of service does your Jobs Access project provide? If this type of service is provided, currently, what are the average costs per trip, the typical fares that Job Access passengers and the general public pay for this service, the number of trips provided, and passengers served per month? **(Note: values may be rounded)**

Type of Service	(A) Does your project provide this service? *(Please check one for each.)* No	(A) Yes →	(B) Currently, what is the average operating cost per trip for this service? *(Please enter dollar and cents.)*	(C) What is the fare that a Job Access passenger pays for a trip on this service? *(Please enter dollar and cents.)*	(D) What is the fare that the general public pays for a trip on this service? *(Please enter dollar and cents.)*	(E) If your passenger fares are based on zones, what is the range of fares that Job Access passengers pay per trip? *(Please enter dollars and cents.)*	(F) How many trips does your Job Access transportation service provide each month? *(Please enter numbers.)*	(G) How many passengers does your Job Access transportation project serve each month? *(Please enter numbers.)*
1. Fixed route service (regular van, bus or light rail) (N=135)	28%	72%	Range: $0 - $187.00 Median: $10.06 (N=91)	Range: $0 - $4.00 Median: $1.00 (N=91)	Range: $0 - $4.00 Median: $1.00 (N=89)	Range: $0 - $4.00 Median: $ .75 (N=31) to Range: $0 - $12.00 Median: $1.55 (N=31)	Range: 0 - 456,502 Median: 1,420 (N=84)	Range: 0 – 875,000 Median: 2,773 (N=83)
2. Variable or flexible route service, that is, bus or vanpool service that follows a route that changes to meet needs (N=117)	68%	33%	Range: $0 - $74.00 Median: $9.73 (N=32)	Range: $0 - $4.00 Median: $ .35 (N=31)	Range: $0 - $4.00 Median: $1.00 (N=20)	Range: $0 - $2.00 Median: $ .50 (N=05) to Range: $0 - $3.00 Median: $ 2.00 (N=05)	Range: 0 – 35,000 Median: 1,100 (N=29)	Range: 0 – 9,997 Median: 288 (N=31)
3. Demand-response service, that is, passengers call ahead for service (N=124)	39%	61%	Range: $1.00 – $52.34 Median: $15.00 (N=63)	Range: $0 - $10.95 Median: $1.00 (N=61)	Range: $0 - $12.17 Median: $1.75 (N=49)	Range: $0 - $4.00 Median: $ .88 (N=18) to Range: $0 - $44.00 Median: 2.75 (N=18)	Range: 18 – 28,760 Median: 1,385 (N=62)	Range: 8 – 203,498 Median: 200 (N=58)
4. Carpool service (carpools created by the project) (N=111)	92%	8%	(N=02)	(N=03)	(N=01)	(N=01)	(N=02)	(N=04)
5. Mobility or trip manager, or broker service that provides information on how to use transportation services (N=114)	66%	34%						
6. Other (*Please specify*) _____ (N=90)	84%	16%	(N=07)	(N=07)	(N=05)	(N=02)	(N=06)	(N=06)

(Please note: The number of respondents for question 5.4 and 5.6 were too small to provide meaningful statistics.)

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6. Of the passengers that your Job Access transportation project serves, about what percent could be described as the following? (*Enter percent, if none, enter '0'.)*

1.	TANF recipients	(Range: 0 - 100%) (Median: 16%) (N=110) %
2.	Non-TANF Welfare-to-Work program participants (Department of Labor)	(Range: 0 – 60%) (Median: 4%) (N=93) %
3.	Other low income (below 150% of poverty)	(Range: 0 - 100%) (Median: 30%) N=107 %
4.	Reverse commuters, with no income restrictions	(Range: 0 – 90%) (Median: 0%) (N=91) %
5.	General public	(Range: 0 – 100%) (Median: 19%) (N=107) %
6.	Other project participants (for example, Medicaid recipients, senior citizens, etc.) *(Please specify program)* _____	(Range: 0 – 100%) (Median: 0%) (N=89) %

7. How are Job Access project fare box receipts used? *(Please check all that apply.)* (N=142)

1.	[16%]	Included as part of match for Job Access grant
2.	[51%]	Used to support operating costs of Jobs Access project
3.	[32%]	Returned to organization's general revenue fund
4.	[2%]	Other *(Please specify.)* _____
5.	[25%]	Not applicable – do not have fare box receipts

8. About what percent of your project's Job Access funding is used for a mobility or trip manager, or broker services? (*Enter percentage; if none, enter '0'.)* (N=137)
(Range: 0 – 100%)
(Median: 0%)

_____ %

9. As of June 30, 2002, under your Job Access grant(s), for how many months have these transportation services been provided? (*Please enter number of months)* (N=135)
(Range: 0 – 58 months)
(Median: 24 months)
(Mean: 23 months)

_____ months

10. How are employers involved with either the funding or implementation of this Job Access project? *(Please check all that apply.)* (N=139)

1.	[16%]	Employers provide some or all of the matching funds for the service
2.	[7%]	Employers provide additional funding-- beyond the Job Access project match funding-- for services
3.	[2%]	Employers make in-kind contributions such as vehicles, maintenance for vehicles, or fuel
4.	[17%]	Employers pay fares for employees who are passengers receiving services
5.	[9%]	Employers supplement the service by providing emergency rides for special circumstances (for example, when employees must leave early for family emergencies)
6.	[31%]	Employers have adjusted work schedules to accommodate the operating limitations of the Job Access transportation service
7.	[4%]	Employers provide vans or shuttle buses to take workers from the end of the transit service to the workplace
8.	[25%]	Other *(Please identify)* _____
9.	[48%]	No employers are involved with the implementation of this project → ***(Go to Question 13)***

11. About how many employers are involved with either the funding or implementation of this Job Access transportation project? *(Enter number; if none, enter '0'.)* (N=93)

(Range: 0 – 3,000 employers)
(Median: 3 employers)
(Mean: 54 employers)

_____ employers

12. Which specific employers (public or private) in your area are significantly involved with helping TANF recipients or low-income people get to work? *(Please identify the employers; use additional sheets if necessary.)* (N=152)

[34%] Don't know

13. In addition to your Job Access services, what other transportation services in your area are provided by other human service or transit agencies? (*Please check all that apply.*) (N=147)

1. [10%] None→ ***(Go to Question 14)***
2. [60%] Fixed route bus or van service
3. [20%] Trains or light rail
4. [38%] Flexible route bus or vanpools
5. [39%] Demand response vanpools
6. [33%] Carpools
7. [57%] Taxis
8. [68%] Medicaid, Medicare, Head Start, or Office of Aging vanpools
9. [20%] Other *(Please identify)*

_____

14. What was the role of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in planning and approving your Job Access project? (*Please check all that apply.*) (N=145)

1. [15%] Not Applicable – this project is in a rural area not subject to an MPO. → ***(Go to Question 15)***
2. [59%] Provided data for project plan
3. [69%] Reviewed plans for project
4. [36%] Coordinated and facilitated the creation of this project
5. [9%] Provided funding for this project that was included in the match
6. [9%] Created a process and selected MPO organizations to provide services
7. [30%] Helped prepare/write grant application
8. [21%] Other *(Please explain)*

_____

15. What was the role of the state DOT in planning and approving your Job Access project? (*Please check all that apply.*) (N=145)

1. [38%] Not Applicable – this project is in an urban area, subject to an MPO. → ***(Go to Question 16)***
2. [23%] Provided data for project plan
3. [49%] Reviewed plans for project
4. [19%] Coordinated and facilitated the creation of this project
5. [30%] Provided funding for project that was included in the match
6. [16%] Created a process and selected organizations to provide services
7. [22%] Helped prepare/write grant application
8. [18%] Other *(Please explain)*

_____

16. Overall, how satisfied or not are you with how your Job Access project has enabled your organization to help people get to work? (*Please check one.*) (N=138)

1. [49%] Very satisfied
2. [39%] Generally satisfied
3. [9%] Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. [2%] Generally dissatisfied
5. [1%] Very dissatisfied

17. How has your participation in the Job Access program affected coordination and collaboration with social service organizations in your service area? (*Please check one.*) (N=143)

The level of coordination and collaboration has…

1. [36%] Greatly increased
2. [37%] Generally increased
3. [15%] Slightly increased
4. [12%] No change
5. [0%] Slightly decreased
6. [0%] Generally decreased
7. [0%] Greatly decreased

18. Please briefly explain below the reason for your response in question 17. *(Please use additional sheets if necessary.)*

(N=126 comments)

19. How has your participation in the Job Access program affected coordination and collaboration with other transportation or transit organizations in your service area? (*Please check one.*) (N=142)

The level of coordination and collaboration has …

1. [20%] Greatly increased
2. [28%] Generally increased
3. [17%] Slightly increased
4. [15%] No change
5. [1%] Slightly decreased
6. [1%] Generally decreased
7. [0%] Greatly decreased
8. [20%] Not applicable—we are the only transit organization in service area

20. Please briefly explain below the reason for your response in question 19. *(Please use additional sheets if necessary.)*

(N=100 comments)

21. Please describe any difficulties your project experienced, if any, in coordinating and collaborating with transportation, transit or social service organizations. (*Please use additional sheets if necessary.)*

[57%] No difficulties--> *(Go to Question 23)*

(N=87 checked the no difficulties box)
(N=43 comments)

22. Please describe how difficulties with coordination and collaboration with transportation, transit or social service were overcome, if at all. (*Please use additional sheets if necessary.)*

[13%] Difficulties identified in question 21 were not overcome

(N=19 checked the no difficulties box)
(N=28 comments)

Funding for the Job Access Project

23. In addition to the FTA's funding for this project's Job Access grant, what other sources of funds were used to fund your organization's Job Access transportation services? (*Please check all that apply.*) (N=144)

1. [58%] State TANF funds
2. [35%] State transportation funds
3. [25%] Other State funds
4. [43%] Local government funds
5. [34%] Local transit operator funds
6. [20%] Private nonprofit organization donations
7. [13%] Employer donations or contributions
8. [47%] Fare-box revenue
9. [19%] Other (*Please specify*)

_____

24. What was the total funding for all years and from all sources for this Job Access project? *(Please enter total dollar amount.)* (N=132)

(Range: $1,275 – $68,586,800)
(Median: $1,022,509)
(Mean: $2,821,652)

$_____

25. Consider all of the sources of funding for this Job Access project. About what percent of your total project funding came from this Job Access grant? *(Please enter percent)* (N=133)

(Range: 3 – 100%)
(Median: 50%)
_____ %

26. As of June 30, 2002, have this project's Job Access funds from FTA grants been fully depleted? *(Please check one.)* (N=144)

1. [29%] Yes→ ***(Go to Question 28)***
2. [71%] No→ ***(Continue)***

27. Consider the period after June 30, 2002. At the current rate of expenditures, for how many months can your organization continue the transportation services that were started under the Job Access program, without getting more funds? *(Please enter the number of months.)* (N=83)

(Range: 0 – 102 months)
(Median: 9 months)
(Mean: 13 months)

_____ months

28. Has your organization applied to receive a Job Access project grant to fund the period after June 30, 2002? *(Please check one.)* (N=145)

1. [78%] Yes
2. [22%] No →Please explain the reasons below.

(N=12 comments)

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29. If your Job Access project funding should end, will your organization continue to provide transportation services that were previously provided through the Job Access grant? (*Please check one.*) (N=142)

1. [1%] Yes, with expanded services
2. [11%] Yes, at same level of services
3. [28%] Yes, at a reduced level of services
4. [47%] Uncertain, will completely discontinue services if other sources of funds are not obtained
5. [13%] No, will discontinue services→ ***(Go to Question 31)***

30. If your Job Access project funding ends, what sources of funds does your organization expect to use to pay for continued operations of the services that were started or expanded under the program? (*Please check all that apply.*) (N=126)

1. [37%] Other federal transportation funds
2. [33%] State TANF funds
3. [44%] State transportation funds
4. [18%] Other State funds
5. [52%] Local government funds
6. [37%] Local transit operator funds
7. [22%] Private nonprofit organization donations
8. [57%] Fare-box revenue
9. [27%] Employer donations or contributions
10. [14%] Other (*Please specify*)

_____

31. What was your organization's expectation for the funding cycle for your Jobs Access project? *(Please check one.)* (N=143)

1. [34%] Funding would be available on a continuing basis
2. [52%] Funding would be available for a limited number of years only
3. [7%] Funding was for a one-time only grant
4. [7%] Other (*Please specify.)*

_____

32. Which of the following does your organization currently use to measure the success of your Jobs Access project? (*Please check all that apply and, if necessary, explain how you measured success in the comments section.*) (N=145)

1. [81%] Number of passengers
2. [64%] Number of trips per day
3. [35%] Number of TANF recipients that have been able to get and keep jobs
4. [26%] Number of federal Welfare-to-Work recipients that have been able to get and keep jobs
5. [60%] Number of employment sites that low-income people can access with the Job Access service not previously served by your organization
6. [57%] Number of employers that low-income people can access with the Job Access service
7. [53%] Number of jobs that low-income people can access with the Job Access service
8. [61%] Additional hours during the day that the project was able to provide service
9. [23%] Transportation service can be sustained without continued Job Access funding
10. [16%] Other (*Please specify*)

_____

33. Overall, based on the above measures used by this Job Access project, how successful has/have this project been? (*Please check one.*) (N=130)

1. [19%] Extremely successful
2. [48%] Very successful
3. [22%] Moderately successful
4. [9%] Somewhat successful
5. [2%] Slightly or not successful

Comments

34. The Congress is currently considering the reauthorization of many transportation programs, including the Job Access program. Consider the individual services that are funded through your Job Access project when answering the questions below.

a. If federal funding for the Job Access program were no longer available for your project, how and to what extent would these individual services be sustained, if at all. *(Please use the back of this sheet or additional sheets if needed.)*

(N=129 comments)

b. If federal funding for the Job Access program were no longer available for your project, how and to what extent would these individual projects' resources, clients, and services be affected, if at all. *(Please use the back of this sheet or additional sheets if needed.)*

(N=124 comments)

35. Please provide below any additional comments that you have about the implementation of the Job Access program, your project, the transportation needs of low-income people and people moving from welfare-to-work, or any issues raised by questions contained in this questionnaire. *(Please use the back of this sheet or additional sheets if needed.)*

(N=72 comments)

Thank you for your help.

GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgment

GAO Contact

Katherine A. Siggerud (202) 512-2834

Staff Acknowledgment

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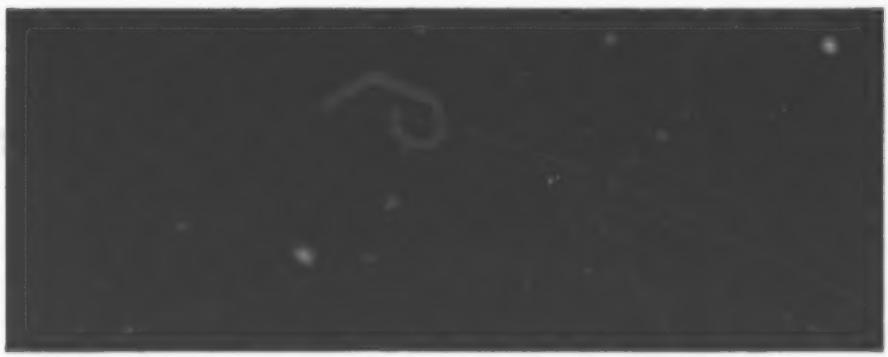

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